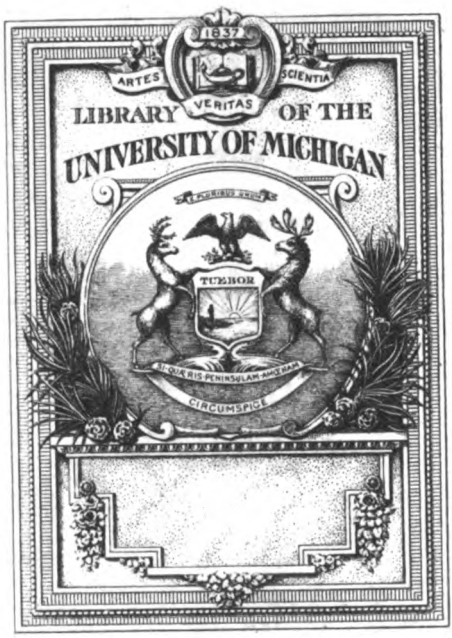
B 1,468,539


1837
ARTES
SCIENTIA
VERITAS
LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
TUEBOR
CIRCUMSPICE

THE

STRAND MAGAZINE

An Illustrated Monthly

Vol. LXVI

JULY TO DECEMBER

London:

GEORGE NEWNES, LTD., 8—11, SOUTHAMPTON STREET, AND EXETER STREET, STRAND.

1923

INDEX.

		PAGE
ACROSTICS	..64, 163, 243, 414, 534,	556
AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR	*F. Britten Austin.*	107
Illustrations by A. C. Michael.		
APES AND THEIR WAYS	*R. I. Pocock, F.R.S.*	299
Illustrations from Photographs.		
ARTISTS, £100 IN PRIZES FOR		85
ARTISTS, RESULT OF THE COMPETITION FOR		349
AT MR. BESLEY'S	*Denis Mackail.*	462
Illustration by Norah Schlegel.		
AUTHORS OF TO-DAY, SOME FAMOUS	*Mrs. C. A. Dawson-Scott.*	
DANE, CLEMENCE		155
GALSWORTHY, JOHN		520
HUNT, VIOLET		158
JESSE, FRYN TENNYSON		70
KAYE-SMITH, SHEILA		65
SHAW, BERNARD		392
SINCLAIR, MAY		68
STACPOOLE, H. DE VERE		395
WELLS, H. G.		389
WEST, REBECCA		160
ZANGWILL, ISRAEL		522
Illustrations from Photographs.		
BOERS, MY ESCAPE FROM THE.—PART I.	*The Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill.*	537
NOW TOLD IN FULL FOR THE FIRST TIME.		
Illustrations from Drawings and a Photograph.		
BRITAIN, THE SEVEN WONDERS OF		276
THE OPINIONS OF SOME EMINENT MEN.		
Illustrations from Photographs.		
CAT'S-EYE RING, THE	*"Ole Luk-Oie."*	484
Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas.		
CINEMA, THE CHILD AND THE	*Dr. C. W. Kimmins.*	469
Illustrations by Bertram Prance.		
COUNTERFEIT PRESENTMENT, A	*H. A. Vachell.*	290
Illustrations by John Campbell.		
CRUSOE, HEATH ROBINSON	*W. Heath Robinson.*	666
DÉBUT OF BATTLING BILLSON, THE	*P. G. Wodehouse.*	31
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.		
FACE VALUE	*Roland Pertwee.*	504
Illustrations by Chas. Crombie.		
FEAR-HEALER, THE	*Perceval Gibbon.*	14
Illustrations by W. R. S. Stott.		
FIRST AID FOR DORA	*P. G. Wodehouse.*	127
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.		
FIRST MAN, THE	*W. B. Maxwell.*	368
Illustrations by J. Dewar Mills.		
FORBIDDEN SUBJECT, THE	*A. Conan Doyle.*	120
Illustrations by H. K. Elcock.		

PAGE

GENTLEMAN WHO PAYS THE RENT, THE .. .. *Perceval Gibbon.* 456
Illustrations by A. C. Michael.

GOLF, HOW TO IMPROVE ONE'S .. .. *Cyril J. H. Tolley.* 362, 493
Illustrations by H. F. Crowther Smith and W. F. Thomas.

GREEN BOTTLE, THE .. .. *Mrs. Jacques Futrelle.* 266
Illustrations by W. Smithson Broadhead.

HARDY, THOMAS, O.M. .. .. *Harry Furniss.* 252
Illustrations by the Author.

"HAY QUE CAMBIAR" (ALL CHANGE) .. .. *Roland Pertwee.* 257
Illustrations by John Campbell.

HOLIDAY HUMOURS 172
Illustrations from Drawings.

HUMAN LEOPARDS, THE .. .. *L. J. Beeston.* 527
Illustrations by Chas. Crombie.

IT ALL TAKES TIME .. .. *Stacy Aumonier.* 404
Illustrations by Frank Gillett, R.I.

KIDNAPPED "GENERAL," THE .. .. *Stacy Aumonier.* 187
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

KNIFE, THE .. .. *Perceval Gibbon.* 398
Illustrations by H. Coller.

LONG ARM OF LOONEY COOTE, THE .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 567
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES .. .. *A. Conan Doyle.* 323, 445, 557
Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs.

MEUNIER, THE ART OF SUZANNE: A FAMOUS PAINTER OF PRETTY GIRLS .. 619

MINA'S NECKLACE 85

NO BETTER THAN SHE SHOULD BE .. .. *Elizabeth Folsom.* 164
Illustrations by W. E. Webster.

NOT WHOLLY MATRIMONY .. .. *Thomas Joyce.* 655
Illustrations by Treyer Evans.

NO WEDDING BELLS FOR HIM .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 431
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

PERFECT CRIME, THE .. .. *"Seamark."* 215
Illustrations by H. K. Elcock.

PERPLEXITIES .. .. *Henry E. Dudeney.* 104, 126, 289, 380, 526
Illustrations from Diagrams.

PILGRIM OF ROMANCE, A .. .. *Mrs. C. N. Williamson.* 3
Illustrations by F. Matania, R.I.

PROBLEMS, CHRISTMAS .. .. *Henry E. Dudeney.* 652
Illustrations from Diagrams.

PROMOTION, THE .. .. *Florence A. Kilpatrick.* 285
Illustrations by H. M. Bateman.

QUEST OF THE GRIZZLY-GRAY, THE .. .. *Bertram Atkey.* 581
Illustrations by C. E. Brock, R.I.

RETURN OF BATTLING BILLSON, THE .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 231
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

ROYAL SITTERS, MY 610
A SYMPOSIUM OF ARTISTS WHO HAVE PAINTED THE ROYAL FAMILY.
Illustrations from Paintings.

PAGE

SAMSON IN PETTICOATS, A .. .. *St. Nihal Singh.* 224
Illustrations from Photographs.

SHADWELL KID, THE .. .. *Holworthy Hall.* 499
Illustrations by Chas. Crombie.

SPIN OF THE WHEEL, THE .. .. *F. Britten Austin.* 350
Illustrations by John Cameron.

SPORT, THE SUNNY SIDE OF 24
Illustrations from Drawings.

SUSPICION .. .. *W. B. Maxwell.* 475
Illustrations by W. Hatherell, R.I.

TAKING PAINS .. .. *W. W. Jacobs.* 87
Illustrations by Robin.

TARN, THE .. .. *Hugh Walpole.* 548
Illustrations by A. Gilbert, R.O.I.

TENNIS, HOW TO BECOME FIRST-CLASS AT 94
By Some of Those Who Have Done It.
Illustrations by H. F. Crowther Smith.

TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART., THE. *E. Phillips Oppenheim.*
No. 4.—The Shaftesbury Avenue Murder 74
No. 5.—The Tenant of the Lighthouse 178
No. 6.—A Young Man's Kiss 244
No. 7.—The Avenue of Death 381
No. 8.—Madmen's Luck 509
Illustrations by S. Seymour Lucas and F. E. Hiley.

TETHERSTONES .. .. *Ethel M. Dell.* 46, 199, 305, 415
Illustrations by P. B. Hickling.

TRIAL BY ORDEAL .. .. *F. Britten Austin.* 638
Illustrations by A. C. Michael.

TRIMMER OF THE *TREBIZOND*, THE .. .. *W. Townend.* 139
Illustrations by H. Coller.

UKRIDGE SEES HER THROUGH .. .. *P. G. Wodehouse.* 337
Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.

"US BUILDERS——" .. .. *A. Neil Lyons.* 100
Illustrations by Arthur Watts.

WHITE SLIPPERS .. .. *Charlton Lawrence Edholm.* 624
Illustrations by Ugo Matania.

WOMEN WRITERS OF TO-DAY, SOME .. .. .. *Mrs. C. A. Dawson-Scott.*
Dane, Clemence 155
Hunt, Violet 158
Jesse, Fryn Tennyson 70
Kaye-Smith, Sheila 65
Sinclair, May 68
West, Rebecca 160
Illustrations from Photographs.

Printed by Newnes & Pearson Printing Co., Ltd., Exmoor Street, Ladbroke Grove, W.10, for Messrs. George Newnes, Ltd., 8-11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

NEW TORY BY W.W.JACOBS

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

ETHEL M.DELL P.G.WODEHOUSE
E.P.OPPENHEIM PERCEVAL GIBBON
MRS C.N.WILLIAMSON A.NEIL LYON

ULY
1/-

"I rapidly improved from the first, and felt a reinforcement of strength every day."

So writes a Carlisle physician (Nov. 29th, 1922) and his letter is so interesting that we publish it in full:—

"In my case the results of Sanatogen have been nothing short of marvellous. For over six weeks I had been confined to bed suffering from Malarial Debility and Recurrent Dysentery. I was reduced to a very low condition, had lost 35 lbs. in weight, and was so weak that it was quite impossible for me to ascend a stair of twelve steps. ***I was continually sick and nothing would stay on my stomach.***

"Three weeks ago I was ordered Sanatogen and milk. ***This is my sole diet, and I have lived on it ever since.*** I rapidly improved from the first, and felt a reinforcement of strength every day. My enteritis is much improved, my weight is increasing, and, extraordinary as it may seem, ***to-day I have been able easily to walk three miles.***

"I give you these details spontaneously, so much has the change impressed me in view of my condition three weeks ago. ***And I can assure you that when I resume work I shall not fail, in the public interest, to recommend your preparation.***"

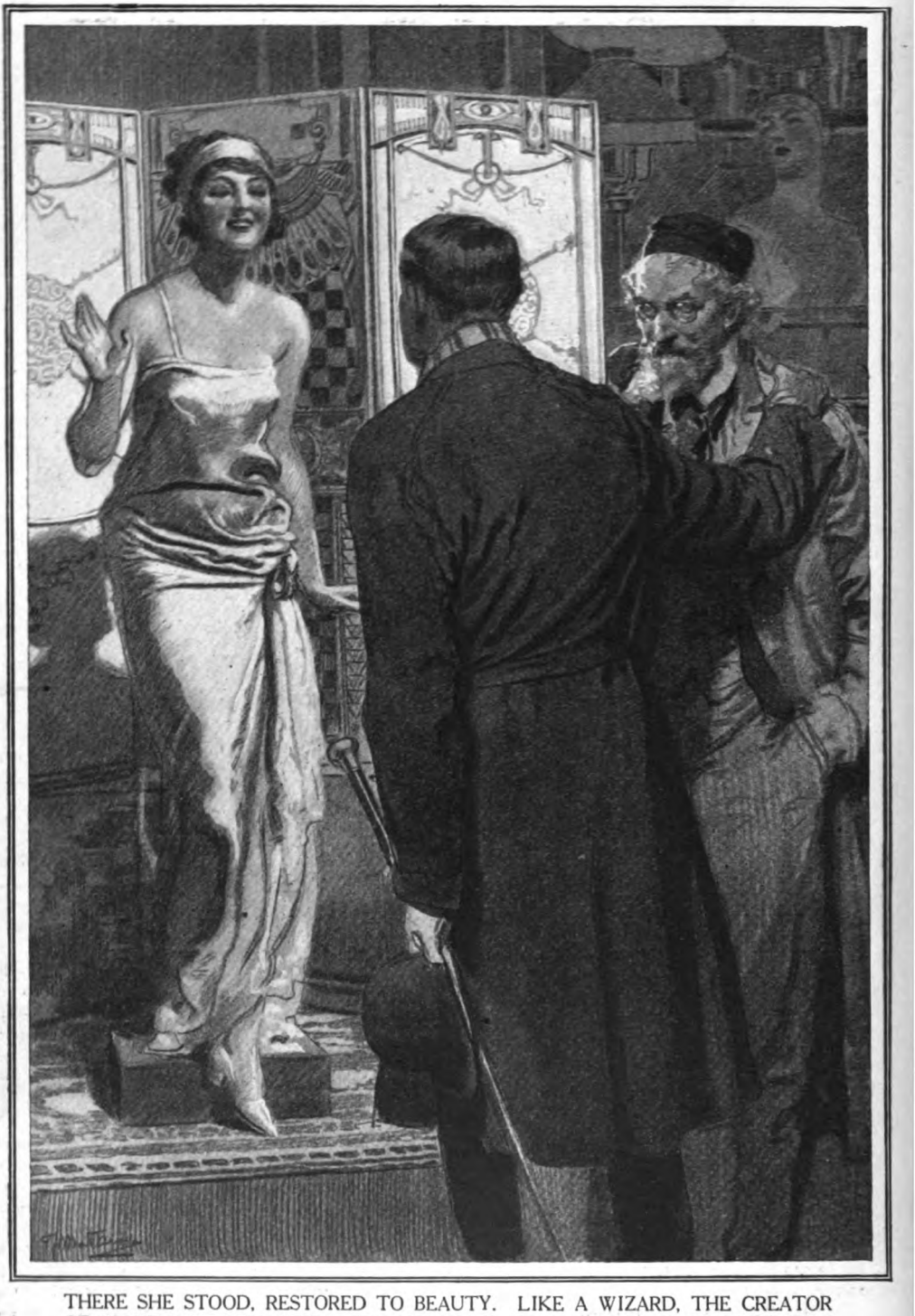
A.,——M.B.

Whether you are seriously ill or only a little run-down—nothing can do such marvellous things for your health as Sanatogen. Buy a tin at your chemist's—from 2/3 to 10/9—and send a postcard for full information to Genatosan, Ltd., Loughborough, Leicestershire.

SANATOGEN

(The True Tonic Food.)

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
July, 1923.



THERE SHE STOOD, RESTORED TO BEAUTY. LIKE A WIZARD, THE CREATOR OF WAXEN WOMEN APPEARED ACTUALLY TO HAVE ENDOWED THIS NEW WORK OF HIS WITH LIFE.

(See page 13.)

A PILGRIM OF ROMANCE

by

MRS C.N.WILLIAMSON

ILLUSTRATED BY F.MATANIA R.I.

THE Savarin is that *chic* little hotel where the real Parisians stay—if they can afford it—when they come to New York. It is not necessary at the Savarin to know English. Even Gustave, the door-porter, is French. He was the Savarin before the war. And since the war he has come back, with a limp and the Croix de Guerre.

One day he beamed as a dark young man with very black eyes, very white teeth, and the look of George Carpentier ten years ago, hurled himself through the revolving glass door into the street.

"*Mon lieutenant!*" Gustave saluted.

"*Mon brave caporal!* Ah, those were the days! Queer to meet you here. I'm not lieutenant now, you know."

"*Alors, Monsieur le Comte!*"

"Pooh! What does a Count count in New York? I'm your old comrade and country-man. A taxi, please! Tell the chauffeur—my English is no good—to drive to Division Street, going slowly through Hester."

Gustave looked startled. "But, monsieur —pardon!—that is not seeing New York! *Mon Dieu*, someone has been pulling the leg of monsieur—what they call spoof. There is nothing to see in Hester Street of Division."

"There is something for me," said the young man, whose Irish-French name was Brian de Vallonet. "It's an affair of sentiment. I have been told—yes—I have been told as far away as Paris, by an American artist, that in one of those two streets (he does not remember which, though he thinks it is Division)—is what he called a junk shop."

"Ah, there would be many—if Monsieur le Comte is interested in junk shops at present."

"I am interested in this one, for it may be my only hope of learning about—something lost. The shop is kept—if it still exists—by a man who was once an illustrator of magazines and newspapers. But he drank away his success. He went down in the world. He specializes in old magazine covers, with the heads of lovely ladies on them. Some are valuable—hard to get. He shows these heads framed in his window, and if you go in to buy, he tells you stories of famous artists—of their models, too. I thought, if you had ever been in those streets, you might tell me if the place was there these days, for my artist has lived in Paris for years. He could not even recall the name of this junk man."

"Ah, monsieur, I regret I can give you no news. Pardon my indiscretion, but *I* specialize more in the heads of lovely ladies on their own shoulders than on magazine covers."

Both men laughed. "But I must be off," said de Vallonet, and Gustave gave the order for the taxi.

The cab with Brian in it flashed south from the Savarin, pausing now and then as if for a long rest-cure at some congested crossing. The fine, tall buildings of which he had heard impressed the Parisian. He stared at the splendour and at the crowds. What a city! Paris itself was provincial beside it. He felt unimportant, young, alone, rather helpless, and as if he could be homesick; because after long waiting, and many disappointments, it seemed as if his fantastic quest could only end against another blank wall.

Ever since 1917, when he had first seen the picture on a torn magazine cover—rescued it in a trench, and an American liaison officer had said that real girls usually sat as models—de Vallonet had been a seeker. He had resolved that, if an original of the picture existed in flesh and blood, he must know her. She would be worth going across the world to meet. Indeed, she seemed to *belong* to him. She was *his* girl—his one and only girl.

Brian had been scarcely more than a boy

Copyright, 1923, by Mrs. C. N. Williamson.

in those days; twenty perhaps, and five years had passed one way and another since then. But he had never forgotten the sweet "belonging" impression left by that face delicately sketched with pastel effect on the torn cover of a magazine.

Beautiful and individual and somehow mysterious the face had been, with big, wistful eyes of smoke-blue half veiled by dark lashes; a gay, brave mouth contradicting the eyes' sadness; and, for a frame, clouds of dusky hair.

The liaison officer, amused at the French boy's persistence, had written to the magazine editor asking: "Who was the girl on your cover for June, '17?" But discouraging news came back. The artist (whose name almost illegibly signed the sketch) had been a clever amateur. This design was the first of his, so far as the editor knew, to be published. It had been accepted months before it appeared. Meanwhile the artist had gone to France, and died of pneumonia before he reached the Front. As for the model, her face was unknown in the artist's coterie. The picture had happened to attract attention; questions had been asked; but echo alone answered. So—that was that. But after the war ended, and a tedious illness of Brian's father finished in death, the pilgrim of romance started out on his long-delayed quest.

The girl must be somewhere, and he would discover her, even though she played the game of lost needle with the whole United States as the haystack. Perhaps, because she was out of reach, she was La Princesse Lointaine, the woman of dreams, passionately desired. It was all very well for old men to say, "Thank God for the kisses you've never had; they are the best of all in the end." That philosophy was not for Brian de Vallonet at twenty-five. He was ready to travel west and east, and engage detectives if necessary to go where he couldn't go, all for the chance of a kiss from La Princesse Lointaine. Now he had arrived on her side of the water. At least she wasn't so *lointaine*—so remote—as she had been before!

BUMP! The young man shot out of a dream, and smashed his smart hat on the top of the taxi. Here was a different New York from the New York of the Savarin!

The chauffeur's head pivoted. 'Say, we're at Hester Street. How slow d'you want me to go?"

Brian became excited. He knew what "slow" meant, but he couldn't explain "*how* slow" in English. "*Tr-è-s douce-ment!*" he replied. Yet it was the gesture, like a saint calming the waves, which really explained.

Hester Street! The taxi limped and crawled, but it would have been hard to speed in a thoroughfare jammed with huge vans progressing at snail's pace, and a pack of people wherever the vans were not. Such people, too! Brian knew Paris and Marseilles, but never had he seen human beings of so many races and sorts crowded into so small a space. There were Poles, Hungarians, Russians, Italians, Jews straight from Palestine, Spaniards, Chinese, of every possible age from two years up to a hundred; and (you would have said, at a quick, bewildered glance) of four or five sexes!

This was more interesting than Brian had imagined. He stopped the taxi, gesticulated for it to follow, added himself to the crush, and savoured the peculiar atmosphere of Hester Street as he looked for the junk shop of the old illustrator.

Yes, there were the "huddled old brick and wooden buildings," with narrow glass doors at the top of steep steps, described by the artist to whom that American liaison officer had sent him in Paris. In some show-windows dusty panes dimmed the yellow lights which displayed second-hand furs, and yards of sparkling gauze crusted with spangles. In others, groceries, wondrous eatables, were exposed to air and microbes. Long dangling loops of desiccated mushrooms, like big dead moths, were strung on thread. There were fish of many sorts, and every creature of sea or earth that could be dried. Tiny restaurants sent forth fragrance of cooking that joined the charcoal smoke in the street, and the scent of roasting chestnuts. Yiddish signs were writ large above low doors, and Chinese laundrymen washed Jewish or Italian shirts when it became imperative that shirts *must* be washed. It was a world, was Hester Street!

It took Brian de Vallonet a long time to reach the end, for he stopped to stare into every junk shop, and occasionally stepped inside to inquire. At last, however, he came to a halt, facing a wide, dusky tunnel which a lamp-post sign told him was Division Street.

Brian threw a backward glance. Yes! The chauffeur had caught his meaning, and crawled after him, smoking a cigarette. *Bien!* There was hope still. The artist in Paris had thought the place was in Division Street.

If Hester Street was strange, Division Street was stranger; roofed along its endless length like a queer rough arcade. This roofing was formed by the Second Avenue Elevated, whose trains roared by so often that Brian could not think between roars.

He walked slowly. There were no "junk

shops" here. Many places of business looked new, as if the street might have changed a good deal in a few years. Some were large, with an air of importance, and motor-cars were parked before them. Blazing windows lured with gorgeous gowns and fashionable furs. Sequined stuff made rivers of light — blue, gold, scarlet, emerald. Eccentricity was the note. It sprang at the eye; it gave queer personality to the street. He ought to have been discouraged by another disappointment, but somehow he was not. His heart quickened. It was as if a hand touched his shoulder, a voice whispered in his ear: "You've come to the right place!" He was suddenly excited. Ought he to pause? Ought he to go on? Must he cross to the other side? In an instant the question answered itself. Brian stopped as if he had been shot. He exclaimed aloud: "*Mon Dieu!*" He was face to face with a miracle.

Others stopped also, as people in the street do stop if you so much as look up at the sky. Here was a handsome, well-groomed youth crying out and gluing his nose to a window, as if he had spied a long-lost friend or the Koh-i-noor diamond. Several men, women, and flappers glued their noses also—noses much longer than Brian's—to the same window.

The display was attractive. Though the shop was small, it was almost defiantly smart. It specialized to-day in dance dresses, three of them: one black-and-gold, one poppy-red, and one white-and-silver. All three were shown on life-size wax models. The white gown was the middle one of the group, standing slightly in advance of the others. Dresses and wearers were pretty, perhaps the best in the whole street, for the place was brand-new and had to advertise itself. Even so, what should hold a young man hypnotized? Unless, indeed, he were a buyer from some country firm, who had found here the "effect" he wanted?

Ladies so lovely in wax that ladies in flesh might envy their grace.

He didn't look commercial, this youth! Yet commercial he must be, the glued noses scented, to stare into a shop, and then plunge in as if the devil or a rival traveller were behind him!

Nobody was more surprised than Miss Rebecca Nathan. She was doing watch-dog for her Uncle Hymy and Aunt Rache, during the interlude when sensible persons who had money to feed their faces fed them. As a rule there were few customers at that hour for small houses like the Nathans'. Uncle Hymy and Aunt Rache daily took advantage of this fact. Their niece was intelligent, if inexperienced. She could be trusted to welcome a coming guest, not to speed one.

Clients were so rare between twelve and one that Rebecca was accustomed in that interval to adorn her person. This feat she accomplished in a cubby-hole behind a row of dress-hangers. There was a wash-basin, and a square of mirror which turned

a girl so green that she avoided despair with lots of rouge and lip salve. Miss Nathan had achieved half a Cupid's bow, and begun another, when a slam of the door sent heart to throat. It might be one of them awful hold-ups you read of!

A glance from behind the dresses, hung in a row like Bluebeard's wives, was not reassuring. A strange young man had not only bolted into the shop, but into the shop window!

Better be killed, thought Rebecca, if this was a hold-up, than slanged by Uncle Hymy and Aunt Rache! Cupid's bow forgotten, she bounded to the front. She did not *feel* brave. But there was nothing else to be!

Plucking up courage, the girl sprang to the rescue of her uncle's property, for the fellow had already dared to move it. She jumped up on the window platform and squeezed her plump body between the outstretched hands of the marauder and the mannequin in white. Brian's smartly-gloved hands dropped to his sides in bare time to avoid contact with Miss Nathan's person. But his eyes flashed. It was not now in Rebecca's imagination alone that he looked dangerous. Nothing could stop him from possessing this treasure, this miraculous transformation of his love, this presentment of her almost in flesh and blood. No, he had not searched in vain for years until this most amazing moment, to fail when success was almost in his hand. If this figure of beauty were not for sale he would take it, and leave money behind him to atone. But tact before violence! He wanted information as well as possession; and forgetting all his English he tried to explain.

"Speak American, mister, or Yiddish," flung in Rebecca. "I don't know Egyptian or Eskimo much."

Unluckily, Brian resorted to gesture. His hand flew to his pocket. How should Miss Nathan know that it sought to produce money, not a pistol? With a squeak, involuntarily she stepped aside and bumped against the mannequin in white.

Already near the edge of the platform, it fell with a crash to the floor, face down.

Brian had snatched at the delicate dress, but too late. The gauze tore in his grasp, and at the expression of his face Rebecca suddenly lost fear of him. This swell was a knut all right, but he wasn't a thief. Kneeling on the floor beside the prostrate figure, he groaned aloud, and actually turned pale at sight of the wrecked waxen beauty. The smiling face was irrevocably crushed; and though Miss Nathan was not inclined to enact a death-bed scene, as the young man was, she was frightened at the havoc wrought.

Uncle Hymy had but lately bought this mannequin at a bankrupt sale of a more important shop than his, and though second-hand, it had been so superior to its fellows that he had paid a high price for it. Only last night she and Aunt Rachel had dressed the big doll while Uncle Hymy looked on, explaining that the factory price of such a model would have been at least three hundred dollars, maybe more. He had, with comparative willingness, parted with one hundred, expecting the mannequin to be as good as new for years. And the cost price of the torn dress had been thirty dollars. It would have sold for sixty, at least!

The catastrophe wasn't Rebecca's fault, but she would be scolded, unless—unless—— Being more afraid now of her relatives than of the foreigner, the best thing to do was to burst into tears. She did it. And this was the last straw for one of many noses pressed all this time against the plate-glass window-pane outside. The owner of that lively nose darted to the corner and called a policeman.

He was a tall policeman, and by Heaven's mercy he was of Latin blood! Not French, indeed, but the next best thing for Brian de Vallonet—a Neapolitan.

Close to Division Street lies the "Little Italy" of New York, and the district is patrolled by more than one Italian policeman. He arrived on the spot just as Hymy and Rachel had blown back to their own premises, and exclamations and explanations in a Babel of tongues were bursting on the air like badly-made fireworks.

AT first gasp, Roderigo Rossi ranged himself on the side of the shopkeepers. Everyone was gesticulating over the ruined waxen lady, and he took it for granted that the pale stranger was the culprit.

"Say, what you doin' here, anyhow?" he bawled in good American. "D'ye take this store for a boxin' ring? D'ye tink y' own Division Street?"

But something in the rolled "r's" and the dark flush under the tall policeman's olive skin thrilled Brian de Vallonet with the hopeful thought—"Blood Brother!"

"I do not own Division Street, but I wish to own this mannequin," he flung back in French, sprinkled with Italian. "I came to buy, not to steal. It was not I who broke the face. I would have cut off my hand sooner. For there is a great resemblance to one I love. This young person—this young lady—misunderstood. It was she who knocked the figure off the platform, and wrecked my hopes with it! But not all, thank Heaven, not all of my hopes! If I can find out where the model was made, if I can go to that place—if I can buy a new head, just the

same as this, if I can learn what I wish to learn, even now the mannequin is worth to me whatever these dreadful people ask."

The dreadful people asked two hundred dollars for the wreck of wax and gauze, nor did they know where the model had been made. In fact, they knew, and wished to know, very little except the art of barter and sale. That they had brought almost to the point of perfection. But Rebecca, relieved of fear, even complimented for her courage (which had indirectly produced a good profit), had a sudden revulsion of feeling in favour of the enemy. He *was* a good-looking boy! He had such nice clothes, and his black hair was smooth as a jet helmet. She would never see his like again in this window of Division Street, and now that he had apologized through the interpreter for his temper, she realized that she had had a romantic adventure. While the Frenchman paid and got his change, she ran into the shop, three doors off, whence the model had come, and where the bankrupt sale was still going on. She returned—unmissed by her ungrateful hero—just as he was edging dolefully through the crowd to his taxi with the mannequin in his arms.

"You drive along Eighth Street, east of Broadway, and you'll come to the place where they make those wax Janes," she said. And she gave him an address.

For a long, long time Rebecca remembered the "*Thank* you, mademoiselle!" that she received then, though the ten-dollar bill which accompanied the words was soon spent.

The disgusted chauffeur drove so fast that no fussy policeman along the route could see the wax casualty and arrest his fare for an assassin, joy-riding with the victim!

BRIAN DE VALLONET staggered up two steep flights of stairs with the body in his arms. At last, on a dim landing, in front of a closed door, he paused. Supporting the figure on its high-heeled satin slippers, he drew a few long breaths. Next he knocked at the door. Nobody answered, though voices were audible, so he turned a handle and pushed. Then the door opened, revealing a picture as strange as any that Brian's eyes had ever seen.

Down in the street, staring up at an old building which had the air of a disused warehouse, he had feared that his errand was vain—feared that Rebecca had lied, to get him out of the way. Even mounting the stairs, with their look of leading nowhere save to regions of emptiness, he had still doubted Miss Nathan's story. But with the opening of the door he knew that, unless he were in a dream, he had come to the right place.

This was, indeed, the factory where beautiful women were created—a kind of up-to-date Olympus where the gods walked in sculptors' smocks, saying, "Let there be ladies!" and there were ladies; ladies so lovely in wax that ladies in flesh might envy their grace.

What Brian saw was a huge, high-ceilinged room, lit to a violent whiteness from end to end by many unshaded lamps with throbbing cones of electric brilliance. There was little noise, yet feverish activities of many kinds were going on in this wonderful business of creation. Brian, at the door, faced several exquisite life-size figures, complete except for clothes. Eve before the Fall could have had no more charming look of gaiety and innocence; but the slim *papier-mâché* torso, to which a wax head, childlike bosom, and airily poised limbs were attached, was so delicately vague in outline that Eve need not have blushed for it, even if she *had* swallowed the lion's share of the apple!

Workmen—gods, under the direction of a head or boss-god—had just fitted these nymph-like visions with arms and legs. Other visions were alarmingly inchoate: heads and busts standing on long rows of shelves; detached arms lying about, their adorable hands fixed for ever in delicious gestures, emphasized by the coralline glitter of manicured nails; also dainty ankles, high insteps, and toes ready to be stockinged in silk, and shod for sport or dance.

Some heads upon these shelves had elaborately-dressed hair—gold, copper, or bronze. Their lips wore cherry smiles, their cheeks dimpled pinkly, and long lashes cast shadows upon *couleur de rose*. Others were starkly bald, lashless, and pale as Niobe, mother of Grief, yet somehow beautiful and almost embarrassing in their unpreparedness, because of the curious individuality expressed by each. Some of the scattered limbs were well-nigh covered with a thick powder of dead white, as if they had been rolled in flour; and Brian's startled eyes beheld this coating give place to flesh tints under the rubbing manipulation of workmen. As he stared, the boss-god stepped up.

Brian had had no time to notice him in detail, but now he saw that here in a sculptor's white smock was a man as remarkable as his work, a man with the head of a genius. He and no other must have copied in wax the elusive loveliness Brian had followed and sought, as a child follows and seeks the will-o'-the-wisp! Those capable, artistic hands held for him the strings of Fate.

Irving Silver, maker of wax models, smiled at sight of the ruined wax beauty,

but it was a mystified smile. He knew his own creations. He could recognize even a cloud of brown hair, a dimple, and the corner of an eyebrow; but the young man in the case puzzled him. Why should a youthful foreign gentleman of attractive appearance stagger into this workroom, burdened with a broken mannequin, and looking like a distraught lover rushing his wounded sweetheart to a surgeon?

"What can I do for you?" the surprised sculptor inquired.

Brian answered in French—floods of French. Fortunately, Irving Silver had studied in Paris for a year or two in his very young youth, and under this urge forgotten words crowded back to his alert intelligence. He understood vaguely that the Frenchman was eager to supply the figure with a new head. Not *any* head (which would have been a simple matter), but a duplicate of the head destroyed. He understood also that a still more important question remained: had there been a living model, or was the lost charm of that smashed face a conception of the sculptor's fancy? For a new head, and still more for the wanted information, Monsieur Brian de Vallonet would give much money. As for the second question, Silver could settle that at once. There *had* been a living model, but long ago he had lost all trace of her.

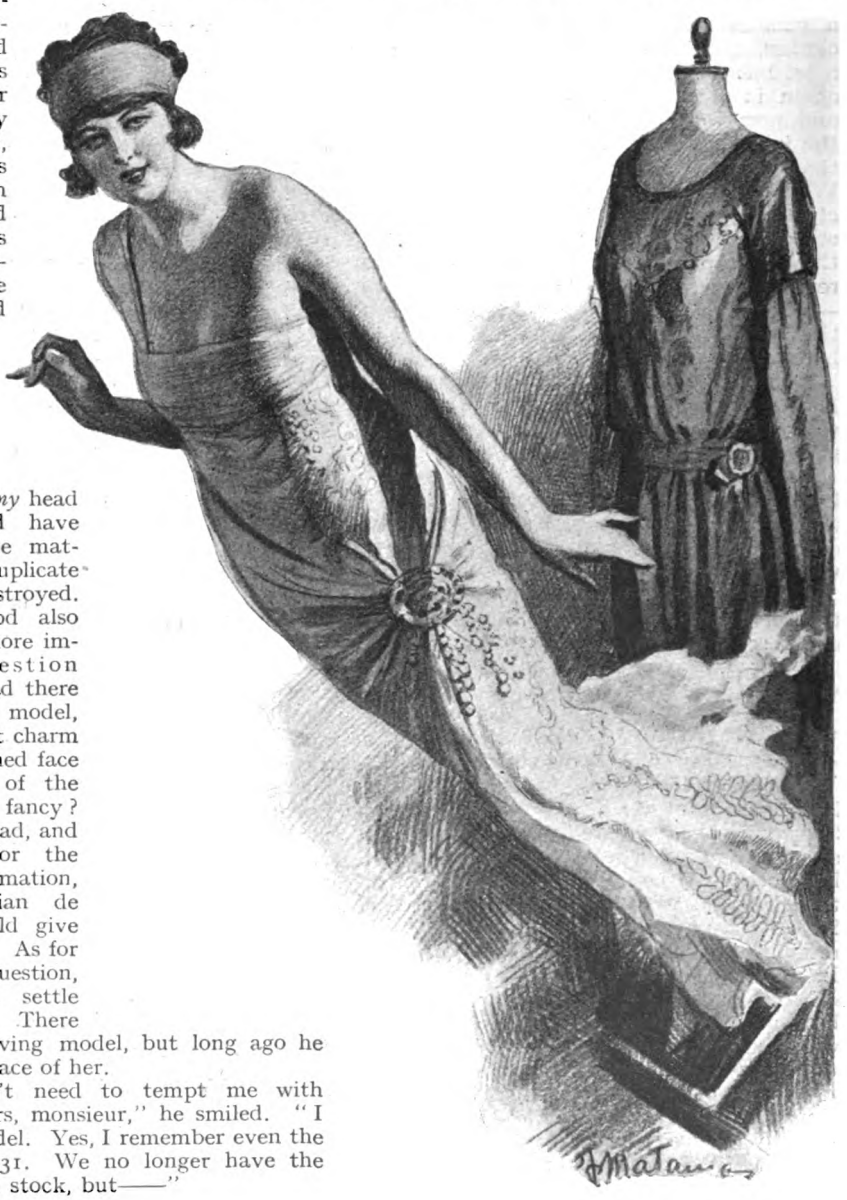
"You don't need to tempt me with fantastic offers, monsieur," he smiled. "I made this model. Yes, I remember even the number—10,731. We no longer have the mannequin in stock, but——"

"*But!*" groaned Brian. "Always that hateful word 'but'!"

"Wait. Don't be discouraged till you need to," advised Mr. Silver, not knowing yet how many discouragements his odd customer had suffered. "What I was going to say is this: I'll gladly sell you the head for the price I make to—er—the trade, and fit it on to the body, if——"

"*Mon Dieu!* 'If' is as bad as 'but'!"

"——if the mould still exists. You see, we keep our moulds till they wear out, so as to repeat orders. They last for years,



Involuntarily she stepped aside and bumped against the mannequin in white, which fell with a crash to the floor.

but the mould of a popular model—and this one has been particularly popular—is used up sooner than others. It's months since I saw the mould for the head you want, and I must warn you my impression then was that it had passed its prime—lost contour, you know. Still, if it hasn't been destroyed——"

"Destroyed?" Brian's look made Silver feel like a doctor who has bereft a patient of hope.

"Unfortunately a few of our moulds *were* destroyed some weeks ago in a slight fire we had."

The flame of that fire seemed to have scorched Brian's face. Silver was more and more intrigued. At first, even if he had known what had become of the girl who had posed, he wouldn't have given away her whereabouts to this eccentric young foreigner. But now—well, no use thinking of it. He *didn't* know!

"This has been a rush season," he hurried on, "and we haven't thoroughly taken stock of our losses—I mean as to which moulds were burned. They were all old ones. I will make inquiries at once about 10,731, and have the box where the head should be kept looked up. Or no"—he suddenly changed his mind—"I'll see to the matter in person, so there can be no mistake. Would you care to wait, monsieur? Or will you leave the model and call again?"

"Leave the model? No!" the answer was flung back. "As for waiting, I've waited years. I can wait now a few moments. Or hours. Or even days. But for the sake of the saints, *find her!*"

Find her! There it was again! The quaint fellow had said that this was his first trip to America, and the girl had certainly never been abroad. Silver began to feel a strong pull of sympathy, for he was an artist as well as a business man. Romance had its secret appeal. He was thinking hard now, and the more he thought, the more uncomfortably sure he was at the back of his mind—or in his subconscious self—that the mould of 10,731 was gone beyond repair or hope. A new idea was struggling in his head, however, with throes such as Minerva's birth doubtless caused Jupiter. It was a very wild idea. There might indeed be nothing in it, except much bother for a busy man who had his hands full without seeking complications. Before he took a step further, he'd make sure anyway that the step would be worth while.

BY this time the two men had come, somehow, to understand each other's language. Neither stopped to think whether the other spoke French or English. They had lost self-consciousness. Instinct was their dictionary.

"Look here, Monsieur de Vallonet," the sculptor said. "I'm willing to put myself to trouble for you, if necessary. But I'd like to know if it *is* necessary. Are you willing in return to———"

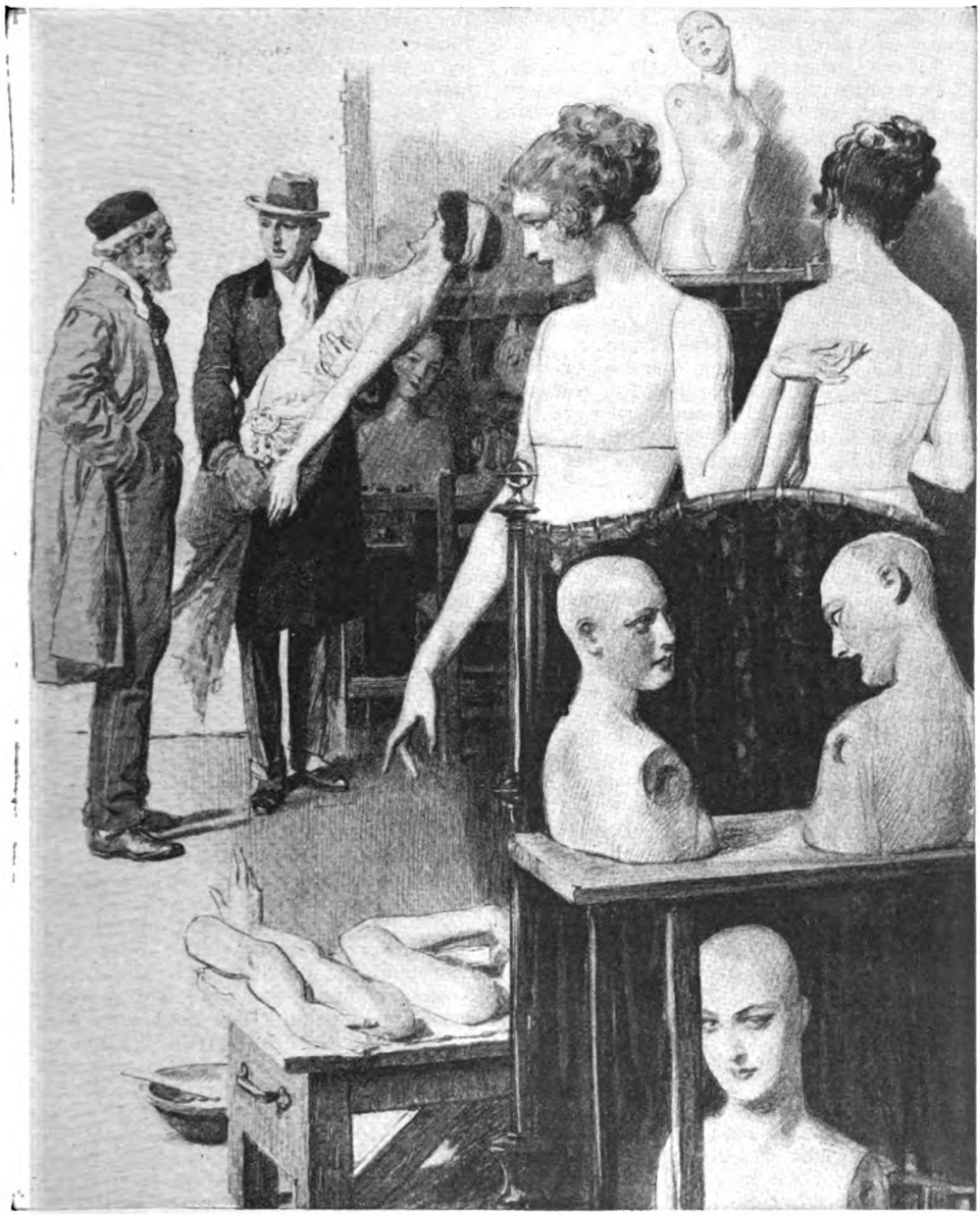
"I'm willing to do anything. I told you, sir, that——"

"And I told *you* it's not a question of money. Are you willing to explain why you're so damned anxious to get this particular head for a big wax doll that you're surely too old to play with?"

Brian explained. He went back to the beginning and explained everything. But it didn't take him long, because he explained so fast. Some of his sentences would have made effective fireworks, especially when, with gestures, he illustrated what he would do if the head could be repeated. He would have it photographed. He would—yes, he would get coloured posters made, such as are used for theatres! He would advertise everywhere—in newspapers, on walls, in every town big and little. He would offer a reward for information—say, ten thousand dollars. Or more, if Monsieur Silver did not think ten thousand enough!

"I don't think, from what I remember of the girl, that a million would be enough to bring her into the limelight if she didn't want to be brought," said the sculptor, when the rockets had ceased to soar. "But I like your sincerity. If the mould exists, you may have some better inspiration later, and I'll help you all I can. I wish I could do more, now I see the kind of chap you are. But I never knew so much as the girl's real name. She was brought here by the very artist you speak of, before he went to fight in France. I'd met him casually and happened to mention that I needed a girl whose shoulders and arms and hands were as perfect as her face. Generally, I have to use several models—one for face, another for arms, etc. And hands are the hardest problem of all. The artist knew such a girl who wanted money; but she wasn't a professional and he couldn't be sure she'd pose for a stranger till he asked. Well, she did pose for me. By George! She was a lovely creature—and a sweet one! I knew her as 'Miss Smith.' But you'd only to see her to realize that Smith *couldn't* be her name. When she finished posing, I asked for some address that might find her if necessary, but she said she was going away and was sure she'd never wish to pose again. So that was that! She may have meant to marry——"

"No, monsieur, there are some things too bad to be true." Brian defended his conviction. But his words were more confident



Why should a youthful foreign gentleman of attractive appearance stagger into this workroom, burdened with a broken mannequin?
"What can I do for you?" the surprised sculptor inquired.

than his heart. He straightened his shoulders. "The next thing is to find the mould."

"*If!*" warned Irving Silver again, as he went to look. Some time passed before he came back. It seemed a long time to Brian de Vallonet, waiting in the little private office of the sculptor. But he whiled it away in gazing at those lovely wax shoulders, those arms, those hands. They had been copied from *Hers!*

Then he sprang to his feet at the sight of Silver, returned. "*Alors?*" he stammered —that one short French word which can

ask so many questions and express so many emotions! "*Et—alors,?*"

"*Alors,*" gravely echoed the American, "I've neither good news nor bad news to give. But something may be managed with what's left. I'm going to do my level best. Will you trust me, and ask no more questions? If you *did* ask and I answered, you'd be more downhearted than you ought to be, perhaps."

They looked each other in the eyes. "Monsieur, I trust you," replied Brian. "I am in your hands."

"Right!" said Silver. "You've given me your address: Hotel Savarin. The minute I have anything definite for you, good or bad, I'll 'phone. But Rome wasn't built in a day. Neither can a girl's head be produced in a day—or seven days; even in wax. Be as patient as possible. And leave me the model."

"*Must* I do that?"

"I'm afraid you must."

Queer! Silver didn't even feel like laughing at the passionate gaze of adieu the Frenchman bent upon that face with the broken smile.

When his customer had gone, the sculptor sat down in the chair just deserted and whistled. Then he opened drawer after drawer of his desk and rummaged through them all. The whole plan depended upon what he might—or might not—find there.

He was searching for an old photograph which he had induced "Miss Smith" to give him in case he ever wished to renew a worn-out mould. He had forgotten it for many months, and it might have been lost. It offered Brian de Vallonet's one chance, however, because—as a matter of fact—Mould Number 10,731 had been devoured by the fire.

DAYS passed and nothing happened, though much that was agreeable and gay might have happened in wonderful New York if Brian had not feared to go out for more than a breath of air, lest he should miss a message from Irving Silver.

Sometimes he was tempted to ring up the sculptor, if only to say "Is there hope?" but that wouldn't be trusting the man in the way he had promised to trust him. "Rome wasn't built in a day, nor in seven," Silver had reminded him. But what about eight? What about nine—ten—eleven?

This was more of a strain on your nerves than you had felt in the trenches, waiting to lead your poilus over the top!

Brian had been discovered by an acquaintance or two, and occasionally his telephone-bell rang, announcing a visitor or giving invitations which were never accepted. But that loud, long, insistent ring late in the afternoon of the twelfth day seemed to mean something special. He was thrilled by a presentiment. His heart pounded in his side.

Yes—at last! It *was* Silver calling. Somehow, he had known it would be Silver!

"I've just got something ready to show," said the pleasant, dependable-sounding voice. "When can you come down?"

"Now!" cried Brian. "As soon as a taxi can take me. Would that I had an aeroplane! You've found the mould? You've made the head?"

"Well, I've done my best, as I promised to do—under difficulties," hedged the man at the other end of the line. "Be here in half an hour; six-fifteen. I can't be ready sooner, because I had to know before making my preparations just when you could call. Hope you won't be too much disappointed with what I've done for you. Good-bye."

Silence. Then Brian, grabbing his hat, was at the door.

He realized that, at the appointed time for the rendezvous, the workers in the factory would probably have gone home. This was all to the good—and thoughtful of Monsieur Silver to arrange it so that there need be no curious eyes to watch the reunion between him and his wax love.

The stairway behind the blank-looking door in the quiet side-street was darker than ever that winter evening, when twilight had closed in. The faint light from above was just enough to prevent stumbling; but Brian bounded up two steps at once, as if he knew the way by heart. He knocked at the closed door—the well-remembered door—that led into the wax model factory. There was no answer at first. Fear shivered through him. Could there be some mistake—some misunderstanding? He ventured to turn the handle. The door was locked! But before he had composed his jarred nerves sufficiently to pound upon the panel he heard a key turn. The door was thrown open. Light flowed out to him. There stood Irving Silver in his white smock of a sculptor. "Come in, my boy!" he cordially welcomed his guest, while in the bright background smiled groups of graceful wax ladies, dressed and undressed, and glass eyes gleamed in pretty faces disconcertingly detached from bodies.

"We're alone with my children," the sculptor went on. "Everybody quit work at six sharp. But I've staged your little show in my own office. Come along."

His visitor followed, unable to speak. Silver shut off the glaring electric light in the big white-walled room of the wax sirens, and Brian saw that the sculptor's own small sanctum was lit solely by a green-shaded

student lamp. At the entrance Silver stopped him. "Get your first impression from here," he directed. "Distance may lend enchantment!"

"Enchantment!" Yes, that was the word.

Like a wizard, the creator of waxen women appeared actually to have endowed this new work of his with life.

There she stood, restored to beauty—no, given beauty more appealing than before! The same dainty pose, the same glittering white gown, the same waved mass of cloudy brown hair, with shadows in it as in clusters of purple grapes, ravished Brian's eyes; and—oh, dearest and most wonderful of all, seemingly the same sweet smile, both sad and gay, that Rebecca Nathan's clumsiness had broken—the smile of the pastel sketch.

Brian did not try to push past the sculptor and go nearer. He stood spellbound.

"Monsieur," he said, in a voice not quite steady, "I can never thank you enough. I can never hope to make you understand what you've done for me. This is a miracle. It is almost as if you gave me my dream—the living girl I came three thousand miles in hopes to find."

"The effect of light I wished to create," confessed Silver. "I wanted you to be satisfied. I'm glad you are."

"At home in France I shall have a room built for her, lighted just like this," half whispered Brian. "Even if, through this resemblance, I don't discover the girl herself—though I mean to—or if Fate has married her to some other man—I won't believe that, in spite of what you said!—I shall be happier with this image of love than most men are with their wives. Monsieur, may I take her away with me?"

"That depends," replied Silver, with a certain dryness, "on the model itself."

"You mean the head is too freshly finished—not yet ready to be moved? Oh, I would risk nothing. But if she must stay here to-night, let *me* stay and watch over her! Meanwhile, *cher monsieur*, what do I owe you for your work—your benefaction?"

"In money, not a cent," said Silver. "As it's turned out, I've been put practically to no expense, and what I've been able to do has given me great pleasure."

Brian caught the sculptor's hand, then both hands, and shook them. But, being French, this was not enough, not half enough, to express his gratitude. He released the hands. He seized the broad white-draped shoulders and, leaning suddenly forward, kissed Irving Silver first on one cheek, then the other.

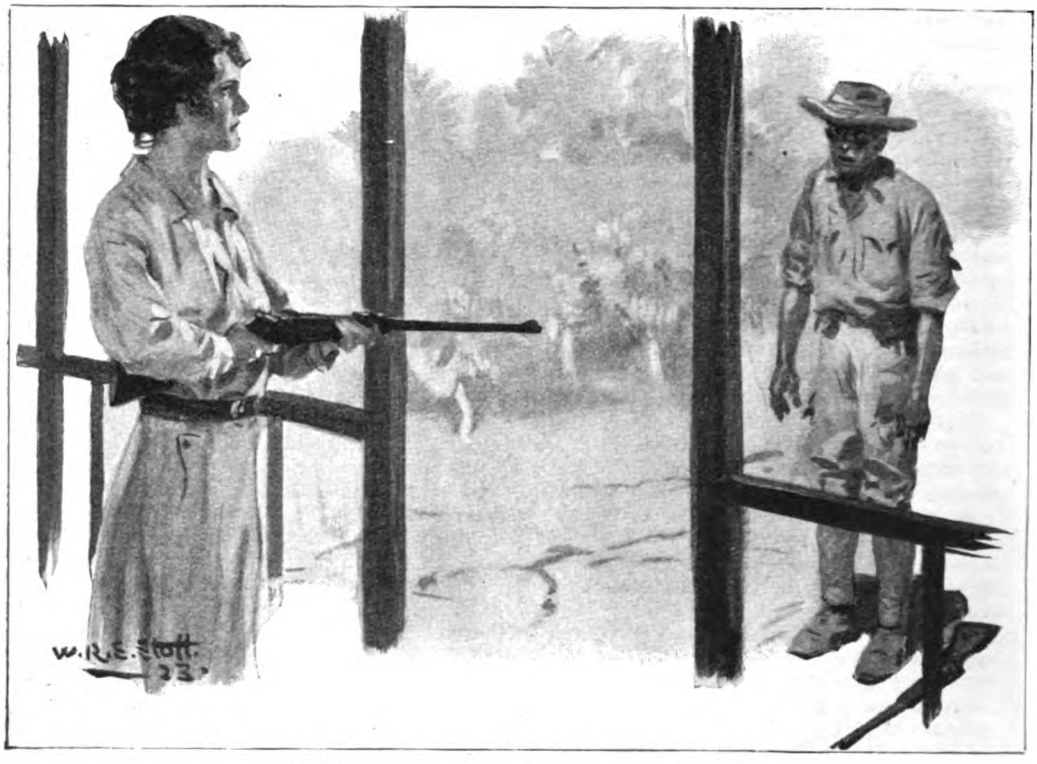
The mannequin laughed out loud.

SO now you know, if you hadn't guessed before, what the plan was. Silver wrote to the photographer who had taken the portrait he had so luckily found. In that way he got in touch with "Miss Smith." A letter from him was forwarded to her. With eloquence such as none but a romantic heart could achieve, he put on paper Brian de Vallonet's story. The girl wrote back something of her own history. She'd been engaged to that young artist who had gone to France—just a "war engagement," made more through the pity akin to love than love itself. Then, while she was working for the sculptor in wax, she had been adopted by a rich aunt. She'd known that she would never need to work for her living again, but she had liked Mr. Silver too much to leave him in the lurch. No, she had never married. She was still with her aunt in Washington. Life was rather dull, she confessed. She would come to New York and pose for a few minutes, as Mr. Silver asked, although, of course, she ought not to do anything so silly. Just for those few moments what would it matter? And afterwards—oh, *nothing* afterwards!—unless, perhaps, at most, the beginning of an amusing little friendship. Then she signed herself, not Mary Smith, but Mary Sanderson.

I wonder if she really thought that such a romantic adventure would end in nothing except an "amusing little friendship" with an ardent young Frenchman who had adored her image for years? If she did think so, she found out her mistake in less than one minute after she laughed. She found out in the young Frenchman's arms, and found out that there can be love—real love—at first sight.

Or—was it first sight? Brian de Vallonet doesn't believe so. He is sure they had met in dreams, which can be more real than what some people call life. And he has persuaded her to agree with him.

Irving Silver chuckled when he was asked to be "best man"; it seemed to him unsuitable. But really, you know, it was the most suitable thing in the world; the wonderful world of love and romance.



"I'll shoot you if you come any nearer!"

The Fear-Healer

by

PERCEVAL GIBBON

ILLUSTRATED BY W.R.S. STOTT

THE swell of the inland hills broke upon the plain in a surf of rocks, filmed over with a thin spray of spike-barbed cactus and plumed aloes. Here, upon the last boulder-slope, where the heat-dazzle trembled man-high over the stones, Barlow stood and looked forth to the trim plantations below which had once been Hackitt's. Away to the right of him, standing as though afloat upon the riot of a tropic garden, he could see the house, its windows dim under the pent of its wide veranda. None moved about it; no smoke rose from it.

"Cleared out in time?" guessed Barlow, thinking aloud in a cautious murmur. "Wonder if they know Hackitt's dead?"

He squatted down where a straggle of prickly pear made a narrow shelter of shadow from the high and overpowering sun, and continued to watch for some movement about the house which should answer him. There was an urgent need just then that he should look well not only before he leaped but

Copyright, 1923, by Perceval Gibbon.

before he even crawled. "Native unrest" it is called; he had come upon it while moving on his secret and generally discreditable affairs beyond the hills at the back of the Mozambique Province; the black spearmen were out in their thousands; hell was spilt in a tide of blood and fire among the villages; and it was death—death long drawn out like the day-dream of a demoniac—to be white. His native carriers had deserted, and, turning back alone, he had come that morning early upon the body of Hackitt, plainly killed, by good fortune, in a fight. And now he was watching Hackitt's house, where Hackitt's wife and daughter had lived, lest the Kafirs, having got there first, might be there yet, lying quiet and hoping for such visitors as himself.

His vigil had endured for perhaps half an hour when he saw movement in the shadow of the veranda. With brows puckered over the pale eyes that looked bleached and colourless in the strong tan of his face, he watched alertly. The door was open; he could see the dark blur of it; and some figure that showed white came forth and stood upon the threshold. It was motionless for a space, as though it stared forth at the empty lands; then it moved forward and came into the sunlight by the low veranda rail.

"Ah!" said Barlow, letting go his held breath. "There's time yet, then."

He rose, and stepped forth from his place of ambush amid the spiked and barbed vegetation to the open sunlight. He did not call, for the house was yet some third of a mile away, but, laying down his rifle, he stood to his full height and brandished his arms, semaphore-fashion.

The figure on the veranda—it was that of a woman—moved swiftly back towards the door, paused and came forward again. Barlow waved once more, picked up his rifle, and started towards the house. As he went, his thin face, with its deep and uneven stain of sun that lay like carelessly-applied paint on his mild and rather commonplace features, took on a complacent and self-satisfied blandness; he knew himself to be advancing fearlessly to the rescue where a rescue was fearfully needed; the posture warmed and pleased him.

He was, for the rest, a smallish man, with no bulk of body to serve as an ensign of his steel-and-hickory strength and endurance. He had not even any telling emphasis of manner, any compulsion of the eye or graphic force of gesture; and outside of his own profession he had little of either renown or credit. The natives, of course, knew him with that uncanny and narrowly detailed accuracy which Kafirs show in their estimates of white men; they had an ugly and devilish apt nickname for him; but the man himself was there to contradict with his vague hesitancy and mildness of demeanour their tales and complainings of daunting prowess and iron ruthlessness.

HE was passing through the last of the young coffee ere a new trouble touched him. He had come four days on foot through bush and over hills since his carriers had bolted with their loads, and his toilet had not been one of his pre-occupations. His clothes were what the thorns had left of them; there was a week's growth as of sparse fur, the colour of wet sand, about his jaws. And the girl had been dressed in white. Out of the great sun-drenched African silence, that yet seemed to rustle with stirrings and mutterings of peril and fear, a paltry embarrassment, a mere shyness, descended upon him suffocatingly.

The tumultuous growths of the garden let him through at last, reluctant and uncomfortable, to the little open space of stamped red earth, veined like a leaf with sun-cracks, to which steps came down from the veranda. At the head of the steps stood the girl in white; she had a gun in her hand, holding it by the barrel, its butt resting on the ground. Barlow lifted deferential eyes, made a formless movement towards his sagging hat-brim, and shambled forward.

"Stop where you are a minute!"

Save that they were jerked forth like a gasp made articulate, the words were clear, icy clear. Barlow halted as at a word of command and stared.

She was staring down at him too, with feverish intentness as though all her being were gathered up and driven forth at her eyes in a desperate energy of scrutiny. She was about his own height, and slender, brown-haired, and might have been twenty-two years of age. The oval of her face had a delicate and luminous tropic pallor; her eyes, great and dark, glowed from it like sleeping fires. Barlow, who saw little of white women at any time, quaked inwardly before her; for him she was exquisite as colours in a sunset, as scents at dawn, as tones in a melody are exquisite, as delectable and insubstantial.

"Who are you?"

He shifted his feet awkwardly at the brief question and made a strained grimace in the shape of a conciliatory smile.

"Me?" he said. "My name's Barlow. I thought I'd better come——"

He broke off. The girl had taken a quick backward pace. She held the rifle now in both hands across her body. If she blenched, he did not see it, but there was no mistaking the new-lit horror in her face.

"Why!" he exclaimed, in utter astonishment. "What's wrong?"

He moved forward as he spoke. The girl brought the rifle to the crook of her arm, its muzzle pointing towards him.

"I'll shoot!" she said.

He stopped again, vacant with bewilderment. He gazed at her stupidly, his mouth open, as though to let what words would drop forth. But no words came.

"I know you," said the girl. "Barlow! I've heard about you! You've done more to make the natives fear and hate white people than any other man in Africa. My father told me; and when—when he comes back——"

She gulped on the phrase, hesitated, and went on.

"Go away!" she ordered. "Get off our land before my father comes back. I'll shoot you if you come any nearer!"

She made a movement with the rifle. Barlow did not stir. His faculties fell into gear again and his mouth closed.

"Shoot, then!" he said. "Shoot when you like. Look at this, though!"

He stooped and laid his own weapon on the ground and rose upright, unarmed, to face her again.

"Now," he said. "I don't understand all this. I came here to move you down to the coast before it's too late. Don't you know that the niggers are up all over the country? What you afraid o' me for?"

The horror in her face had a note in it of bitter contempt.

"Move me down to the coast—you! The coast!" She cried out the last word in a tone of hateful hysteric derision. "The coast—when you could sell us—me—to the Kafirs—as you sold the Lumbo chief to his enemies! We'd—we'd fetch more, wouldn't we—two white women?"

"Well, I'm damned!"

The Lumbo chief! He had almost forgotten himself how once, for a substantial fee payable in quills of rough river-gold and black tusks of ancient ivory, he had, single-handed, suppressed and captured a very dangerous and blood-stained raider and handed him over to those who had best right to his blood. It was like being called to account for the sins of his babyhood.

He pulled himself together. "Never mind about the Lumbo chief!" he said. "Miss Hackitt; don't you waste that bullet on shootin' me! You'll want it for yourself before morning, if you don't start for the coast to-night. I know niggers—I do; and the people that told you all those other things about me must ha' told you that."

He paused; she was still staring at him with the same repulsion and horror.

"What the deuce!" he exploded. "I'm a white man, aren't I? An' you're a white woman in distress? Isn't that the whole thing? Isn't it natural an' proper an' just simply right that I——"

The girl above him shook her head. It stopped him in mid-speech like a hand on his mouth. "Eh?" he gasped.

"No!" she said. "Not you! I—I don't trust you—don't believe you! You—you must go away. My father——"

She broke off, shaking her head at him.

BARLOW felt within him a sensation like physical sickness. Never had he esteemed himself highly or met with high esteem from others. He had plundered freely in his time; he had enslaved; he had killed; in short, he had sinned very hard for a living, but always within the spirit and letter of the code. He had never stolen, for instance, except with the strong arm; he had never cheated at cards or used violence to a woman, and his word was his valid bond. By no standard that he knew had he lowered by a single inch the white man's pedestal of virtue and worth. And now, this fragile wisp of daunting dainty femininity was using to him hurtful words—fighting words, words for which men were killed—and believing them utterly while she spoke them.

"You mean," he choked—"you mean you think that I'd betray a—a white woman—to the niggers?"

He was not to know what she would have answered. A voice sounded indistinctly from within the door behind her; she half-turned to listen, and with the movement so swung the rifle that it no longer covered Barlow. Three lightning strides took him to the foot of the steps and a single spring to the head of them, so that as the speaker from within appeared in the doorway he was standing at the girl's side.

"I *thought* I heard voices," said the newcomer. "Ah!" seeing Barlow; "a gentleman!"

Barlow, strung and keyed for quick action, slackened like a broken string. It was a lady who beamed softly upon him, with the right shade of both greeting and distance for a travel-stained stranger. A lady in every conceivable sense, but especially in the sense of the picture-book, the early Victorian novel, and the best suburban convention. Grey-haired without austerity, pretty without piquancy, mature without mellowness, she had, in that place of blinding sun, soul-searching solitude, and horrid danger, the effect of an English flower pressed and preserved between the grey pages of a scrofulous French novel. Biscuit-coloured shantung silk clad her from neck

to ankle, with white frills at throat and wrists; but much more effectively there shielded and adorned her her complex carapace of manner and manners. Like a turtle with its shell or a king with his crown, to strip her would have been to destroy her.

The girl, following her mother's glance, looked round and found Barlow at her elbow. She recoiled.

"Mother!" she said. "Mother, you've heard of him—it's Barlow!"

Mrs. Hackitt lowered her head in a nod of pleased comprehension.

"How do you do, Mr. Barlow? These are dreadful times, are they not? Dreadful, indeed. But perhaps you have not heard our sad news? My dear husband—Hester's father——"

"Mother!" cried the girl, in an agony. "You shouldn't—you shouldn't have told him!"

Barlow flashed a look at the distress and anger of her young face. He understood. She had been bluffing him, threatening him with the return of Hackitt, whom he had seen that morning when the clamour of the kites and vultures had guided him through the thorn-bush to where the body lay. One of the dead man's "boys" must have escaped and gone home with the news.

"I knew," he said, quickly. "I—I saw him this morning. That's why I hurried on here."

Mrs. Hackitt repeated her nod of acknowledgment.

"That was kind of you," she said, in her delicate small trickle of a voice. "For, as it happens, we are quite alone. All the 'boys' have run away. These foolish native disturbances, you know; so silly! As if we hadn't always treated them well!"

"Yes," answered Barlow, dazedly. "Yes."

"But you must be tired, Mr. Barlow. Oh, I'm sure you are! Won't you come in? We can't offer you tea, I'm afraid, because there aren't any fires; but there is some whisky and some sparklets. Oh, but you must! And you, Hester, dear! Do put down that great ugly gun. I'm sure there's nothing to be nervous about, now Mr. Barlow is here."

She flattered him with her soft restrained smile. The girl looked wanly from one to the other.

"Nothing at all," agreed Barlow. "But I'll just bring up my gun from out there, case any niggers should swoop on it."

He went slowly down the steps and slowly raised his rifle from where it lay. He made, slowly still, a pretence of examining it, bending his head over it the while. It was in his mind to give the girl time to pass on her warnings to her mother. She should say her worst of him and then he would handle the pair of them together.

He was still fiddling with the breech of his gun when, from the stoep above him, the girl's rifle roared and the bullet threw up its dust-spirt at his feet. He jumped aside smartly lest a second shot should follow. But none came. Upon the stoep the girl was leaning weakly against a post beside the steps, and her rifle had fallen to the ground. Her mother had gone in and now reappeared swiftly in the doorway. At sight of her Barlow moved composedly toward the steps. The girl gazed at him with eyes wherein a faintness stood like a blur upon their brightness.

"Oh, what was that?" asked Mrs. Hackitt.

"Accident," replied Barlow, promptly. "Knocked her rifle against the rail, or something. Pity, because o' the noise."

"There, Hester!" said Mrs. Hackitt. "You hear what Mr. Barlow says. And I warned you time after time."

IN the big sitting-room within there was coolness and shadow, and likewise the promised refreshment. It was a large room, extending from the front to the back of the house, handsome in its proportions and luxurious in an up-country pioneer sort of way, with its inevitable trophies of skins and heads, its photographs of plump complacent people in old secure England, and —Barlow wondered at it—a long varnished oar with a light blue blade hanging on a slant upon one wall. But the most wonderful thing was unquestionably Mrs. Hackitt. She sank to an arm-chair, and forthwith it was as though she had put on the room as a garment. If she was incongruous in the glare and colour of the day without, here she dwelt as fitly as the scent upon a flower.

"I have been thinking, Mr. Barlow," she suggested, "that possibly we should do well to leave here for a while."

The girl, standing by the window and gazing forth in silence, turned and sent a look across at her. Barlow leaped at this unhoped-for opening.

"You're right, Mrs. Hackitt. It's what I was saying to your daughter out there. If we start to-night I could have you in safety by to-morrow night, an' next mornin' you'd be in town. There's nothing else to do."

Mrs. Hackitt gave him a look of gentle deprecation.

"To-night?" she demurred. "But the night-air, Mr. Barlow! You know it is very unhealthy?"

"Yes," said Barlow, with an unwonted note of grimness. "Liable to give you fever, unless you're lucky. But, just now,

the day-air's certain death. Only thing is, we can't take much with us and the going is pretty rough. Rough for you and Miss Hackitt, I mean."

Mrs. Hackitt nodded thoughtfully. "Ye-es," she said. "I see. But perhaps—well, we have a donkey here—a great big donkey. We might take turns at riding him. Though he has a nasty habit of lying down suddenly, sometimes."

Barlow smiled. "He'll soon get a habit of standing up again," he said. "I know donkeys."

And thus, with no more of argument or persuasion, it was arranged. The girl had said no more. She helped her mother to get together the likeness of a meal and protested no further, but for Barlow there was a puzzle in the still strain of her face and a hair-trigger quality in her each attitude and movement as though she were gathered up for sudden movement.

"She's got something up her sleeve," he told himself. "There's liable to be another 'accident' if I don't keep a look-out."

He replenished his stock of cartridges from Hackitt's supplies, and found the means, in the dead man's room, for a little improving his appearance by a shave and a wash. He also found a toy of a revolver.

"Miss Hackitt," he said to the girl, when for a moment her mother was clear of the room, "I'm goin' to smash that rifle of yours before the niggers get it. This'll be better for you. Nobody can get within arm's length of you with that; an' it'll be handier to carry."

She put out a hand and took the little weapon. From somewhere within the house came the small noises, the patter and shuffle of Mrs. Hackitt's hospitable activities.

"I am armed already," she said, suddenly. "I will never be taken—nor handed over, either."

"Not if I can help it," he answered. "What is it? A knife? A knife's no good against an assegai or a club, you know!"

"No!" He could not read her look. "My father"—she checked on the word painfully, but held on—"my father always kept it here. He never told us, but I knew! I knew! I was ready for you, you see! Whatever came out of this horrible country I was ready for it. Do you know why I missed you when I shot at you? It was because I was holding it in my hand all the time."

She nodded at him in defiance and triumph. He merely looked at her, while his mind roved from vitriol to hand-bombs.

"He had it in a drawer in his desk," she went on, with a sudden fresh energy of utterance. "I have known of it ever since he took it out to kill our old dog—all these years! But it was when I heard about you and Scott and Harrigan and Pirate Smith"—it was like listening to a child reciting the Commination Service to hear her reel off the names of those men, all known to him, who had seared themselves on the country like a shameful brand—"that I understood what he kept it for. He never told me, but I understood, and I knew I was safe!"

"Ye-es," hesitated Barlow. "But what is it?"

Again that gleam of malice and triumph.

"This!" she answered, curtly, and opened her hand to show him the phial she held in her palm. "If you touch me—if you try to——"

She stopped, for he was smiling.

"So that's your secret!" he said. "Funny, but all those men you're so scared of, Scott and Harrigan and so on, they carry that stuff. But *they* know why it's useful. They've seen what was left o' men who would have given a million pounds for a taste of it. So have I! Look!"

His left hand explored within the waist-band of his breeches; it came forth, and he held out to her such another phial as her own.

"In case," he said. "Just in case!"

She had not time to answer him, for at that moment her mother was audible, gently rattling the contents of a tray as she bore it in.

IT was in the first of the dusk that at last they departed. Mrs. Hackitt had produced for herself a long dark sleeveless cloak with a hood which gave her, with the long flow of its folds, a strange dignity, like that of a stage abbess. Don Juan, the tall donkey, degenerate descendant of the splendid Iberian ass, suffered himself to be saddled and loaded by Barlow, and then, on being led forth, promptly lay down.

"Oh, Juan! Juan!" appealed Mrs. Hackitt.

"Yes, Juan! Get up, Juan!" said Barlow. He bent persuasively to the animal's hindquarters, and seemed to pat them, whereupon Juan did not so much rise as spout to his feet. Barlow repocketed his jack-knife and assisted the lady to mount.

"You're sure you know the way, Mr. Barlow?" was her question ere he hoisted her to the saddle.

The ground rose to the edge of the bush above the plantations, and at the top of the slope they paused by an unspoken common impulse to look back. The colours of the western sky endured yet, dulling like

She opened her hand to show him the phial she held in her palm. "If you touch me—if you try to——"

"So that's your secret!" he said.

dying fires; Africa's brief evening mood laid a still glamour over that wild land, with the house and its fields in the heart of it, aloof from it like a sanctuary. Barlow had left the lamps in the rooms alight, that chance watchers from the boulder-ridge might have something to hesitate about, and so delay pursuit; and the windows shone at them with a mildness and passivity in their stare like the eyes of quiet kine. Had there been time, he would have turned the whole building into one deadly booby-trap ere he left it. But Mrs. Hackitt, lofty on her steed, her cloak flowing from her shoulders like a ghostly dragoon's, looked long and in silence. Then she sighed.

"I wish I could have brought away my bedroom furniture," she breathed.

But the girl only stared, her young face clenched in a frown against the dim dregs of the sunset. The place where for years she had been house-mate of the poison-bottle, thought Barlow, where the means of swift death had been her hoarded treasure.

He took the halter in hand and set forth again. The sparse bush took seisin of him with a shark-toothed branch that touched the sleeve of his shirt and ripped through it to his skin. It closed behind them like deliberate jaws; with one step farther, night and the ageless wild had made them their own. Voices clamoured, the cries of little beasts delivered from the fears of the daylight, and far up the wind, like a hoarse and low-pitched trumpet, a lion challenged in the dark.

"That's a lion," said Barlow over his shoulder. "Cowardly swine, they are! Nothing to be scared of in *them!*"

Mrs. Hackitt acquiesced in a liquid murmur; the girl, bringing up the rear, said nothing. Juan shuddered and gave signs of being about to bray. Barlow kicked him and towed him on.

HE knew his way as a homing pigeon knows it, but not otherwise, for he dared not approach the Kafir path to the south of him which was the one road of the district. The fighting men or their scouts would be holding that. At day-break he would need to see it to check his position; but for the rest of the night there was only that trudge and crush through the dry and crackling bush, that was yet not so parched and brittle but it could strike back and wound like a beast of prey. Soon after midnight they halted, mainly that Juan might refresh himself, in a small open space whence the bush had moulted back from the bare earth. A sky spangled with great white stars roofed them in; from over the tree-tops came the first illumination of a late-rising moon.

They had sandwiches and whisky-and-water in plenty; they sat together as though at a picnic.

"We're makin' good enough time," Barlow was saying. "We'll move faster by daylight. And we'd have heard something before now, if we hadn't outdistanced those niggers."

The words had but left his lips when the night let through the retort. From the southward it came, brief but repeating itself in echoes, the unmistakable sound of a gun-shot.

"Oh, what was that?" It was the girl, crying out in a whisper, as it were.

Barlow lifted a hand. "Wait!" he commanded. "Listen!"

There followed perhaps ten seconds of silence, of held breath, of ears in an agony of alertness. Then, from near at hand—scarce more, it seemed, than a hundred or two yards away—a second shot answered the first.

The women crowded together. Barlow's lifted hand still hushed them.

"It's all right," he whispered to them, hastily. They saw him rise to his knees and draw his rifle to him. "A line o' scouts movin' up an' firin' off their guns to keep in touch with each other. Lie down and let this nearest one go by."

The ass was tethered under the trees out of sight. Barlow stowed his women between bushes at the edge of the clearing, kneeling behind them. A chance channel through the undergrowth opened before them across the line which the scout would follow; presently the crackle of his progress was audible; and then, in a slanting shaft of moonlight, they saw him. A great Negro, naked but for the wisp of loin-cloth about his middle, lifting his blunt and dreadful face to the light of the moon! In one hand he carried the usual sheaf of slender, broad-bladed spears; in the crook of his other arm was his rifle. Perhaps he smelt or breathed something, for he paused not thirty yards from them, and stood, turning his head from side to side as though in suspicion. Barlow felt the girl trembling strongly against his knee. He put a firm hand on her back and pressed her down.

"Wait!" he breathed.

But still the Negro stood, seeming to peer and listen. Then, from the south again, came the rifle-shot of the uneasy scout who had fired before. The Negro jerked to attention, set down his spears, and prepared to fire an answer.

Barlow spared him the pains. He jerked up his own rifle and at thirty yards shot the Negro cleanly through the head. The

women lying before him saw the tall black shape fall at full length as a tree falls; they squeaked and started at the noise of the discharge; while a mile away to the south an uneasy warrior, lonely and ghost-shy, heard it afar and was comforted with a sense of companionship.

"Now," said Barlow, briskly, returning from an inspection of the body, with the bolt of the dead man's rifle in his hand, "now we've got to move. We've got to keep pace with that noisy nigger down yonder and answer his signals. And when daylight comes we'll edge down that way and put him out o' business. Then we'll have the path to travel on. Where's that moke?"

AND so it was they proceeded, strangely in touch with that scared foe whose weapon bleated to them plaintively from the solitude of his murder-path, asking for reassurance, till dawn paled in the east and the little wind that comforts the world at sunset couched down at the coming of the sun.

"We're behind him a bit, I think," was Barlow's judgment. "He'll be camping soon, to eat. We'll find the path about here and come on him from behind."

"Need we see him at all?" inquired Mrs. Hackitt. "That last one was rather dreadful, you know! Couldn't we just pass him by without his knowing anything about it?"

Barlow shook his head. "He'd be reporting that all was clear, and the main body would just pass on. But two dead scouts—that'll make 'em think. They'll go carefully for a bit."

Mrs. Hackitt frowned faintly and regretfully. In the frame of her hood her pleasant face was lined with the strain of the night's travel, but her poise was unimpaired.

"Bloodshed!" she murmured. "I never thought I should see it, Mr. Barlow. And before Hester, too!"

The girl made an inarticulate noise like a jeer without words.

"Bloodshed!" she said. "I've gone in fear of it all my life. But I thought it was worse than that."

"Hester!" protested her mother.

The girl shrugged fretfully. "I feel," she said, "as if these black beasts had been after me to murder me for years—ever since you sent for me to come out here! And now, at last, it's our turn! Our turn and father's!" she cried. She wheeled on Barlow. "We're wasting time. Where is that path?"

He nodded and led the way.

It is a pity that there can be no record of the sensations of N'Zomi, one of the thirty sons of M'Tebu the Chief, as he sat at his simple meal of crushed millet and cold broiled bullock, and lifted his eyes to behold the *umhungu*, the lordly white man, standing over him, watching him with what seemed an almost scientific interest. He started convulsively, and his movement brought within his view a further horror—a black-robed woman sitting upon a great ass and a younger woman who stood at the animal's head. All were looking at him. None spoke.

N'Zomi, son of M'Tebu the Chief, went suddenly to pieces. With a throaty howl he threw himself on his face at the white man's feet. "Chief!" he pattered. "Father! King!"

Barlow kicked him off, and began to question in swift, easy Kafir. And N'Zomi, prince and patrol-leader, answered him faithfully, not daring to lie. He told of the whereabouts of the main body, of its strength and its leaders, of his orders, of his exploits. Barlow listened and nodded agreeably.

"And now," he inquired, at the end of all, "how do you wish to die?"

"Chief!" N'Zomi sprang to his feet. Nothing livened him like the prospect of death. "Chief! You will not——"

He sprang at Barlow, both great hands splayed for the grapple; and Barlow shot him through the body. He fell across the trodden rut of earth that was the main road to the coast.

It was evening when Barlow checked upon the crown of a rise and pointed forward. The women strained to see. Lacking his hunter's eyes, they could make out only that, far away, where the bush gave place to thorn-studded veldt, there was movement as of many people.

"The Portuguese," said Barlow. "Portuguese troops, with guns. We've done the trick. You'll sleep in a bed to-night, an' to-morrow you'll be in town. You'll get a steamer in a day or two, an' then you'll be out of it all. An' you"—he turned to the girl—"you won't need to carry that bottle any longer. Come on, Juan!"

He started forward. The girl ranged alongside him.

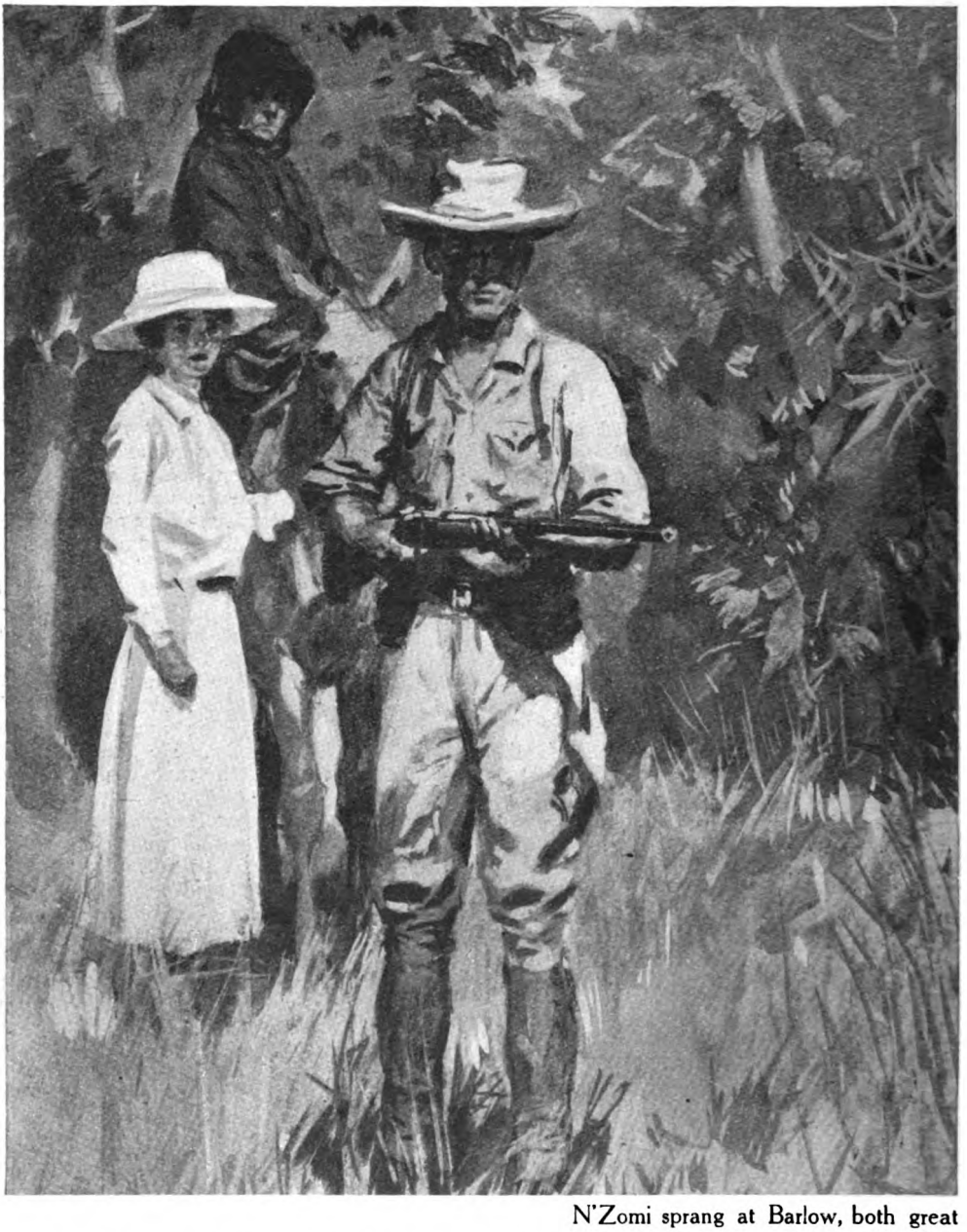
"I'm not carrying the bottle any longer," she said. "I threw it away when we first came to the path."

He smiled at her, not clearly understanding.

"Well, you're safe enough now," he said. "You'll be in camp in an hour."

She nodded. "And you? What will you do?"

"Me?" He did not at once answer. He looked about him at the stale country, with its bush and earth the colour of rust,



N'Zomi sprang at Barlow, both great

its sky of brass, its odours of dust and rotting vegetables.

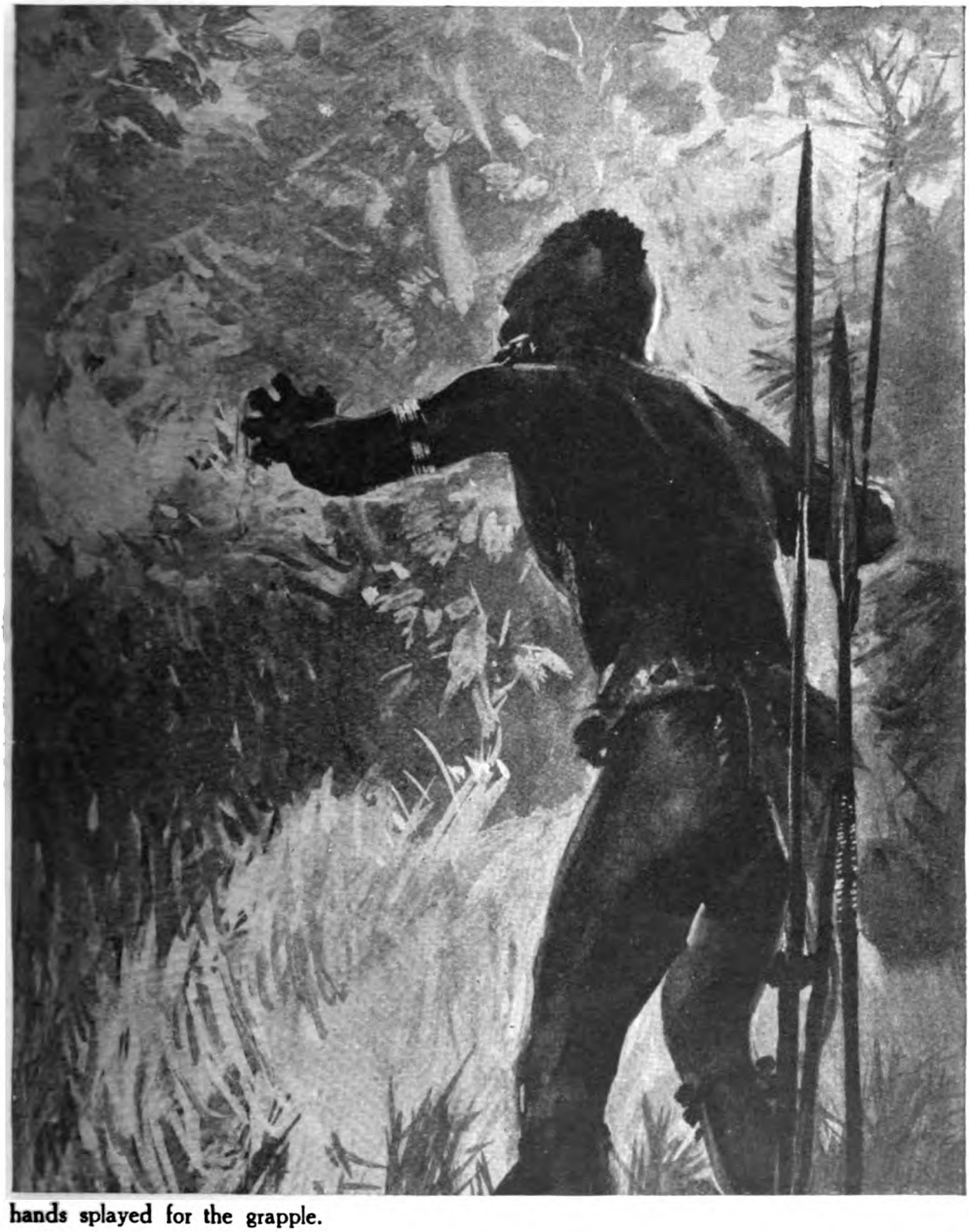
"Well," he said at last, "you heard those stories about me, the Lumbo Chief, an' all that? They need to be told differently, that's all; and it's true, though I say so, that there are places here where the niggers can frighten their children with my name. So I suppose I'll just go to work an' stop this rebellion."

She glanced sideways at him. "You will stop it?"

"Well"—apologetically—"me and some others, like Scott and Harrigan. The Portuguese 'ud take years, an' all that time the niggers'd be gettin' the habit o' war. So it's up to us, who've got our livin' to get here. You'll see!"

"Yes," she said. "I mean to see."

"Eh?" He thought she had spoken with



hands splayed for the grapple.

some hidden significance; her words were the ambush of her meaning.

"I am not going away," she said. "Mother will go by the steamer, of course. But I'll stay—without my bottle of poison. I'm cured."

"Yes!" He was not yet clear about it. "It's a good thing about the bottle, o' course, useful as they can be sometimes. But I don't see just why you're goin' to stay when you can get out so nicely!" She smiled, but not at him. She was looking straight before her as she answered.

"I shall stay to see you stop this rebellion," she replied.

And then the Portuguese sentry challenged, and Mrs. Hackitt threw back the hood from her comely, kindly face.

"I do hope that handsome Colonel Alvares is here," she said.

THE SUNNY SIDE OF SPORT

IF it be true that the British sportsman takes his pleasures sadly, why is it that the leading humorous artists find so much that is laughable in our outdoor sports?

A lawyer would probably sum up the answer by saying that, with the sportsman, laughter is an "accessory after the fact." It is only after the club, bat, racket, rod, or gun is laid aside that the sportsman relaxes his serious expression and allows that sense of humour, upon which the spirit of true sportsmanship is founded, to express itself.

Enter a golf club, a cricket pavilion, or a village inn where the followers of sport foregather to discuss the day's "catch," "bag," or "outing," as the case may be, and you will find them chuckling over the pages of the humorous journals or telling one another anecdotes which reflect upon the lighter side of sport. They are the first to enjoy a joke against themselves.

"Having no spade, partner?"

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

The Guest (*exasperated with waiting*): "I've a good mind to drive off, but I'm afraid of hitting that idiot in front."

The Hostess: "Hit him where you like, dear—it's my husband."

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

Therefore the accompanying collection of humorous drawings will most certainly be appreciated by all lovers of summer sports. These illustrated jokes range from the sublimely subtle to the blatantly ridiculous, but, being "good wine," they need no bush.

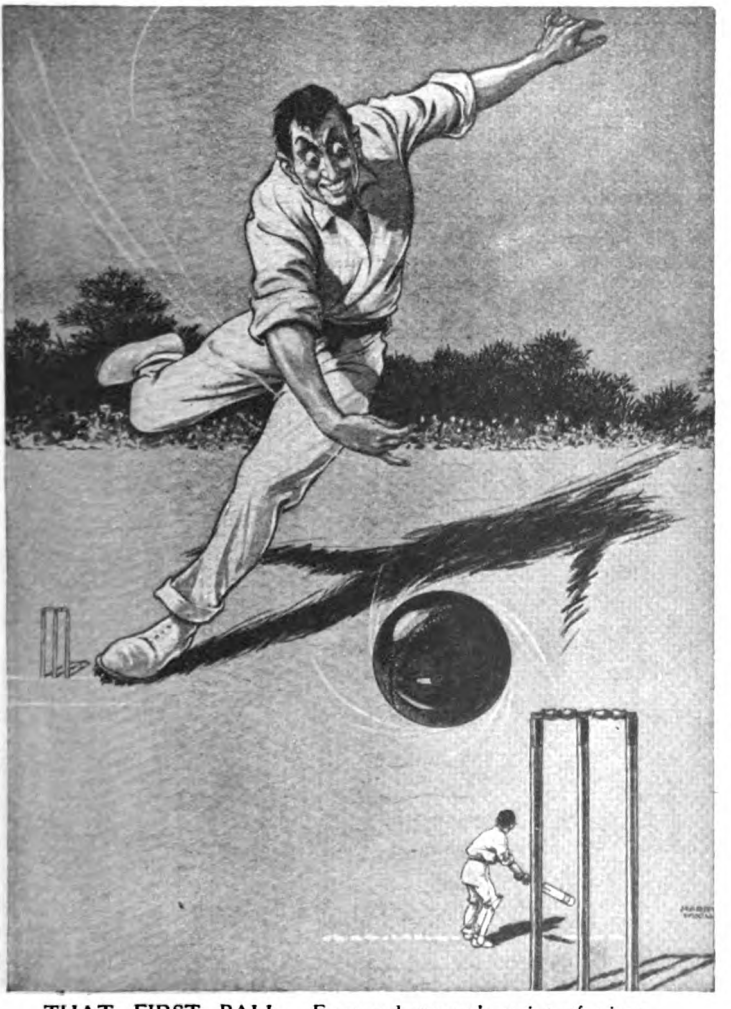
Of anecdotes which appeal to sportsmen, there are thousands. Some, as *Punch* once said, are new but not funny, and the remainder funny but not new. Disregarding their heredity, it is interesting to observe that by far the greater percentage of sporting stories and sporting jokes deal with golf, that exasperating game which has been described by a writer as "the pursuit of pale pills by purple people," and by an ex-sergeant-major as "'ockey at the 'alt."

The tribulations of the game are reflected in the following story.

A golfer was in the act of raising his club to drive his ball off the first tee when the club secretary, a bumptious little man, came rushing towards him, gesticulating and shouting.

"I say, you know," he protested, "that's not playing the game! You've got your ball at least two yards in front of the marker. The correct place for driving off is distinctly indicated, and yet you, one of the oldest members of the club, set a bad example by taking an unfair advantage. You may think it only a small matter, but rules are rules, and——"

"Excuse me," interrupted the golfer, "but when you've quite finished, perhaps you'll allow me to tell you that I'm playing my *second* shot."



THAT FIRST BALL. From a batsman's point of view.
By permission of "The Bystander."

Of course, the Scotsman figures prominently in many golfing anecdotes. There is, for example, the story of the disconsolate Scot who sat on the veranda outside the club-house for several hours without speaking a word to anybody. Presently a fellow-member went up to him.

"What's up, Sandy?" he asked. "Why aren't you playing this afternoon?"

"Have ye no heard?" replied Sandy. "Ah've lost ma ball."

Those who are interested in cross-country running will appreciate the story of the rather bulky competitor who was puffing and blowing along the road, with the number "103" pinned to his back, when the following dialogue ensued between two village wags:—

"I say, Bill, what's '103' mean?"

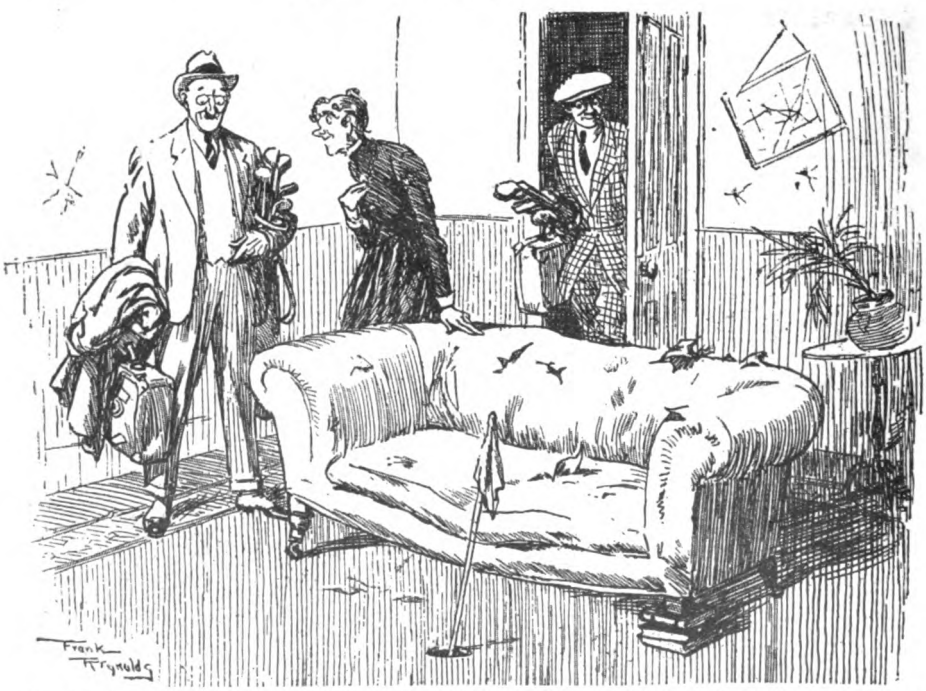
"Don't you know? That's 'is temperature."

The humour of tennis depends so much on the action of the players that

Golfer (*to old lady who has established herself on the border of the fairway*): "Excuse me, madam, but do you know it is rather dangerous to sit there?"

Old Lady: "Oh, thank you very much—but I'm sitting on a bit of my newspaper."

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."



Landlady (*showing apartments in the vicinity of famous links*): "Oh, you'll be quite comfortable here, sir; you see, we're used to golfers."

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

Holiday-maker (*in difficulties*): Oh, dash it! There goes that letter my wife gave me to post a week ago."

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

there are very few unillustrated jests upon the game. Years ago, when the tennis club was regarded as a kind of matrimonial agency, there were many humorous allusions to members of the opposite sex searching for lost balls behind the rhododendrons, and the word "Love," though it meant "nothing" to the tennis player, meant quite a lot to the professional punsters.

Nowadays, however, things are different. The game is far more strenuous, as witness the story of the modest little man who found himself drawn to partner an athletic Amazon.

"I am afraid that you will find me rather an indifferent player," he said, apologetically.

"Never mind," said the girl; "we'll get on all right so long as you'll keep out of the way."

Another tennis anecdote, which reveals an equal degree of acidity, concerns the wit of a famous exponent of the game during a match, at Wimbledon, against a much inferior player. Time after time the latter was seen to swipe blindly at a fast ball, and time after time it would just strike against the wood of his racket and trickle over the top of the net. Presently the champion became irritated by this constant recurrence of "fluke" shots from the wood, and throwing down his racket, he pulled out his handkerchief and proceeded to wipe one of his eyes.

"What's the matter?" asked his opponent. "Dust in your eye?"

"No—splinters," was the reply.

Of the many cricket stories, the following are noteworthy, having been told as true.

A man rang up a cricket club on the telephone and asked to speak to his friend Mr. Dash, who was well known as a bowler, but by no means a remarkable batsman.

"I'm sorry, sir," replied the

MUSICIANS AT PLAY.

A violinist has occasion to adjust his batting-gloves.

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

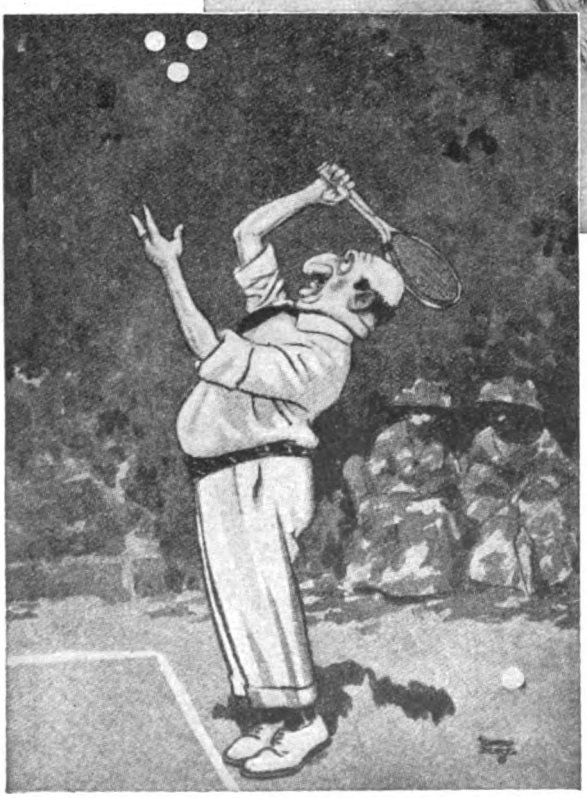
steward; "Mr. Dash has just this minute gone in to bat."

"Right-o; I'll hold the line," was the reply.

The second story concerns another famous cricketer who was also more brilliant at taking wickets than at guarding them.

"They always put me in last," he told a friend, "and such is my reputation that, when playing on our own ground, as soon as I walk out to the wicket the old horse goes straight over and places himself between the shafts of the roller."

A VISION OF THE FUTURE.
Mixed doubles at Wimbledon—*à la* the Russian ballet.
By permission of "The Sketch."



"ICH DIEN."
Mr. Isaacstein takes to tennis.
By permission of "The Tatler."

There are many cricket stories dealing with the ignorance of the game sometimes revealed by spectators of the fair sex, as, for example, that of the old lady who, when told that the demon bowler had taken three wickets for six, remarked, "Oh, indeed; I didn't know he drank."

Another dear old soul was watching a cricket match with her nephew when one of the wickets fell, and the batsman began to walk to the pavilion.

"He wouldn't have been out if he had played with a straight bat," commented the nephew.

"Then why on earth didn't

somebody lend him one?" replied the aunt, indignantly.

In the same category as this, by the way, is a hunting story. A gushing young lady was watching the progress of a hunt, when suddenly a riderless horse was seen galloping across the field in pursuit of the others.

"Oh, poor thing!" exclaimed the girl; "don't you think it ought to be told?"

The majority of fishing stories are founded upon the assumption that all fishermen are liars, or, at least, exaggerators. An anecdote which has now become a classic is that of the bibulous angler who, returning home after a dinner at which many members had been bragging of their enormous catches, suddenly came upon a scarecrow standing in a field with arms outstretched to their full extent. He gazed at the figure for a moment, then, raising

A TIP FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

The new combination game to suit our variable climatic conditions.

By permission of "The Bystander."

AN ECHO OF THE INTERNATIONAL SEASON.

Fair American (*who has flicked her fly off, to ghillie*): "Say, shepherd, I guess a fish has sucked the bug off my string."

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

his fist, he shouted: "You're a confounded liar!"

Then there is the story of the inveterate angler to whom a wealthy friend once presented a fat cigar.

"Believe me," he told a party of fellow-fishermen afterwards, "it was quite ten inches long, and I reckon it weighed a quarter of a pound if it weighed an ounce!"

Another fishing yarn concerns the keen angler who persuaded a novice to join him for a day's fishing, and agreed to lend him the necessary tackle. They sat on the river bank a short distance apart for about two hours, when presently the novice strolled over to his friend looking extremely worried.

"I—er—you know those green and red things——"

"Floats, you mean—what about them?"

"Well, what do they cost?"

"Not much. Why?"

"Well, old man, I'm afraid I owe you for one. You see, mine's sunk."

LUCK!

The Diver: "Thank Heaven, it's a soft roe."

By permission of "The Bystander."

I crept out and stole softly downstairs.

The Début of Battling Billson

by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

IT becomes increasingly difficult, I have found, as time goes by, to recall the exact circumstances in which one first became acquainted with this man or that; for as a general thing I lay no claim to the possession of one of those hair-trigger memories which come from subscribing to the correspondence courses advertised in the magazines. If I encountered Mr. Addison Simms of Seattle after a separation of years I should probably spoil his whole day by cutting him dead. Certainly I should not ask him how he came out on that granary deal. And yet I can state without doubt or hesitation that the individual afterwards known as Battling Billson entered my life at half-past four on the afternoon of Saturday, September the tenth, two days after my twenty-seventh birthday. For there was that about my first sight of

Copyright, 1923, by P. G. Wodehou e.

him which has caused the event to remain photographically lined on the tablets of my mind when a yesterday has faded from its page. Not only was our meeting dramatic and even startling, but it had in it something of the quality of the last straw, the final sling or arrow of outrageous Fortune. It seemed to put the lid on the sadness of life.

Everything had been going steadily wrong with me for more than a week. I had been away, paying a duty visit to uncongenial relatives in the country, and it had rained and rained and rained. There had been family prayers before breakfast and bezique after dinner. On the journey back to London my carriage had been full of babies, the train had stopped everywhere, and I had had nothing to eat but a bag of buns. And when finally I let myself into my lodgings in Ebury Street and sought the soothing haven of my sitting-room, the first thing I saw on opening the door was this enormous red-headed man lying on the sofa.

He made no move as I came in, for he was asleep; and I can best convey the instantaneous impression I got of his formidable physique by saying that I had no desire to wake him. The sofa was a small one, and he overflowed it in every direction. He had a broken nose, and his jaw was the jaw of a Wild West motion-picture star registering Determination. One hand was under his head; the other, hanging down to the floor, looked like a strayed ham congealed into stone. What he was doing in my sitting-room I did not know; but, passionately as I wished to know, I preferred not to seek first-hand information. There was something about him that seemed to suggest that he might be one of those men who are rather cross when they first wake up. I crept out and stole softly downstairs to make inquiries of Bowles, my landlord.

"Sir?" said Bowles, in his fruity ex-butler way, popping up from the depths accompanied by a rich smell of finnan haddie.

"There's someone in my room," I whispered.

"That would be Mr. Ukridge, sir."

"It wouldn't be anything of the kind," I replied, with asperity. I seldom had the courage to contradict Bowles, but this statement was so wildly inaccurate that I could not let it pass. "It's a huge red-headed man."

"Mr. Ukridge's friend, sir. He joined Mr. Ukridge here yesterday."

"How do you mean, joined Mr. Ukridge here yesterday?"

"Mr. Ukridge came to occupy your rooms in your absence, sir, on the night after your departure. I assumed that he had your approval. He said, if I remember correctly, that 'it would be all right.'"

For some reason or other which I had never been able to explain, Bowles's attitude towards Ukridge from their first meeting had been that of an indulgent father towards a favourite son. He gave the impression now of congratulating me on having such a friend to rally round and sneak into my rooms when I went away.

"Would there be anything further, sir?" inquired Bowles, with a wistful half-glance over his shoulder. He seemed reluctant to tear himself away for long from the finnan haddie.

"No," I said. "Er—no. When do you expect Mr. Ukridge back?"

"Mr. Ukridge informed me that he would return for dinner, sir. Unless he has altered his plans, he is now at a *matinée* performance at the Gaiety Theatre."

THE audience was just beginning to leave when I reached the Gaiety. I waited in the Strand, and presently was rewarded by the sight of a yellow mackintosh working its way through the crowd.

"Hullo, laddie!" said Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge, genially. "When did you get back? I say, I want you to remember this tune, so that you can remind me of it to-morrow, when I'll be sure to have forgotten it. This is how it goes." He poised himself flat-footedly in the surging tide of pedestrians, and, shutting his eyes and raising his chin, began to yodel in a loud and dismal tenor. "Tumty-tumty-tumty-tum, tum tum tum," he concluded. "And now, old horse, you may lead me across the street to the Coal Hole for a short snifter. What sort of a time have you had?"

"Never mind what sort of a time I've had. Who's the fellow you've dumped down in my rooms?"

"Red-haired man?"

"Good Lord! Surely even you wouldn't inflict more than one on me?"

Ukridge looked at me a little pained.

"I don't like this tone," he said, leading me down the steps of the Coal Hole. "Upon my Sam, your manner wounds me, old horse. I little thought that you would object to your best friend laying his head on your pillow."

"I don't mind your head. At least I do, but I suppose I've got to put up with it. But when it comes to your taking in lodgers——"

"Order two tawny ports, laddie," said Ukridge, "and I'll explain all about that. I had an idea all along that you would want to know. It's like this," he proceeded,

"Hullo, laddie!" said Ukridge, genially. "I say, I want you to remember this tune, so that you can remind me of it to-morrow. This is how it goes."

when the tawny ports had arrived. "That bloke's going to make my everlasting fortune."

"Well, can't he do it somewhere else except in my sitting-room?"

"You know me, old horse," said Ukridge, sipping luxuriously. "Keen, alert, far-sighted. Brain never still. Always getting ideas—*bing*—like a flash. The other day I was in a pub down Chelsea way having a bit of bread and cheese, and a fellow came in smothered with jewels. Smothered, I give you my word. Rings on his fingers and a tie-pin you could have lit your cigar at. I made inquiries and found that he was Tod Bingham's manager."

"Who's Tod Bingham?"

"My dear old son, you must have heard of Tod Bingham. The new middle-weight champion. Beat Alf Palmer for the belt a couple of weeks ago. And this bloke, as opulent-looking a bloke as ever I saw, was his manager. I suppose he gets about fifty per cent. of everything Tod makes, and you know the sort of purses they give for big fights nowadays. And then there's music-hall tours and the movies and all that. Well, I see no reason why, putting the thing at the lowest figures, I shouldn't scoop in thousands. I got the idea two seconds after they told me who this fellow was. And what made the thing seem almost as if it was meant to be was the coincidence that I should have heard only that morning that the *Hyacinth* was in."

THE man seemed to me to be rambling. In my reduced and afflicted state his cryptic method of narrative irritated me.

"I don't know what you're talking about," I said. "What's the *Hyacinth?* In where?"

"Pull yourself together, old horse," said Ukridge, with the air of one endeavouring to be patient with a half-witted child. "You remember the *Hyacinth*, the tramp steamer I took that trip on a couple of years ago. Many's the time I've told you all about the *Hyacinth*. She docked in the Port of London the night before I met this opulent bloke, and I had been meaning to go down next day and have a chat with the lads. The fellow you found in your rooms is one of the trimmers. As decent a bird as ever you met. Not much conversation, but a heart of gold. And it came across me like a thunderbolt the moment they told me who the jewelled cove was that, if I could only induce this man Billson to take up scrapping seriously, with me as his manager, my fortune was made. Billson is the man who invented fighting."

"He looks it."

"Splendid chap—you'll like him."

"I bet I shall. I made up my mind to like him the moment I saw him."

"Never picks a quarrel, you understand—in fact, used to need the deuce of a lot of provocation before he would give of his best; but once he started—golly! I've seen that man clean out a bar at Marseilles in a way that fascinated you. A bar filled to overflowing with A.B.'s and firemen, mind you, and all capable of felling oxen with a blow. Six of them there were, and they kept swatting Billson with all the vim and heartiness at their disposal, but he just let them bounce off, and went on with the business in hand. The man's a champion, laddie, nothing less. You couldn't hurt him with a hatchet, and every time he hits anyone all the undertakers in the place jump up and make bids for the body. And the amazing bit of luck is that he was looking for a job ashore. It appears he's fallen in love with one of the barmaids at the Crown in Kennington. Not," said Ukridge, so that all misapprehension should be avoided, "the one with the squint. The other one. Flossie. The girl with yellow hair."

"I don't know the barmaids at the Crown in Kennington," I said.

"Nice girls," said Ukridge, paternally. "So it was all right, you see. Our interests were identical. Good old Billson isn't what you'd call a very intelligent chap, but I managed to make him understand after an hour or so, and we drew up the contract. I'm to get fifty per cent. of everything in consideration of managing him, fixing up fights, and looking after him generally."

"And looking after him includes tucking him up on my sofa and singing him to sleep?"

Again that pained look came into Ukridge's face. He gazed at me as if I had disappointed him.

"You keep harping on that, laddie, and it isn't the right spirit. Anyone would think that we had polluted your damned room."

"Well, you must admit that having this coming champion of yours in the home is going to make things a bit crowded."

"Don't worry about that, my dear old man," said Ukridge, reassuringly. "We move to the White Hart at Barnes tomorrow, to start training. I've got Billson an engagement in one of the preliminaries down at Wonderland two weeks from tonight."

"No; really?" I said, impressed by this enterprise. "How did you manage it?"

"I just took him along and showed him to the management. They jumped at him. You see, the old boy's appearance rather speaks for itself. Thank goodness, all this happened just when I had a few

quid tucked away. By the greatest good luck I ran into George Tupper at the very moment when he had had word that they were going to make him an under-secretary or something—I can't remember the details, but it's something they give these Foreign Office blokes when they show a bit of class—and Tuppy parted with a tenner without a murmur. Seemed sort of dazed. I believe now I could have had twenty if I'd had the presence of mind to ask for it. Still," said Ukridge, with a manly resignation which did him credit, "it can't be helped now, and ten will see me through. The only thing that's worrying me at the moment is what to call Billson."

"Too frivolous," he decided at length. "Might be all right for a bantam, but—no, I don't like it. I was thinking of something like Hurricane Hicks or Rock-Crusher Riggs."

"Don't do it," I urged, "or you'll kill his career right from the start. You never find a real champion with one of these fancy names. Bob Fitzsimmons, Jack Johnson, James J. Corbett, James J. Jeffries——"

"James J. Billson?"

"Rotten."

"You don't think," said Ukridge, almost with timidity, "that Wildcat Wix might do?"

"No fighter with an adjective in front of his name ever boxed in anything except a three-round preliminary."

"How about Battling Billson?"

I patted him on the shoulder.

"Go no farther," I said. "The thing is settled. Battling Billson is the name."

"Laddie," said Ukridge in a hushed voice, reaching across the table and grasping my hand, "this is genius. Sheer genius. Order another couple of tawny ports, old man."

I did so, and we drank deep to the Battler's success.

"I've seen that man clean out a bar at Marseilles in a way that fascinated you."

"Yes, I should be careful what I called a man like that."

"I mean, what name is he to fight under?"

"Why not his own?"

"His parents, confound them," said Ukridge, moodily, "christened him Wilberforce. I ask you, can you see the crowd at Wonderland having Wilberforce Billson introduced to them?"

"Willie Billson," I suggested. "Rather snappy."

Ukridge considered the proposal seriously, with knit brows, as becomes a manager.

MY formal introduction to my godchild took place on our return to Ebury Street, and—great as had been my respect for the man before—it left me with a heightened appreciation of the potentialities for triumph awaiting him in his selected profession. He was awake by this time and moving ponderously about the sitting-room, and he looked even more impressive standing than he had appeared when lying down. At our first meeting, moreover, his eyes had been closed in sleep; they were now open, green in colour, and of a peculiarly metallic glint which caused them, as we shook hands, to seem to be exploring my person for good spots to hit. What was probably intended to be the smile that wins appeared to me a grim and sardonic twist of the lip. Take him for all in all, I had never met a man so calculated to convert the most truculent swashbuckler to pacifism at a glance; and when I recalled Ukridge's story of the little unpleasantness at Marseilles and realized that a mere handful of half-a-dozen able-bodied seamen had had the temerity to engage this fellow in personal conflict, it gave me a thrill of patriotic pride. There must be good stuff in the British Merchant Marine, I felt. Hearts of oak.

Dinner, which followed the introduction, revealed the Battler rather as a capable trencherman than as a sparkling conversationalist. His long reach enabled him to grab salt, potatoes, pepper, and other necessaries without the necessity of asking for them; and on other topics he seemed to possess no views which he deemed worthy of exploitation. A strong, silent man.

That there was a softer side to his character was, however, made clear to me when, after smoking one of my cigars and talking for a while of this and that, Ukridge went out on one of those mysterious errands of his which were always summoning him at all hours and left my guest and myself alone together. After a bare half-hour's silence, broken only by the soothing gurgle of his pipe, the coming champion cocked an intimidating eye at me and spoke.

"You ever been in love, mister?"

I was thrilled and flattered. Something in my appearance, I told myself, some nebulous something that showed me a man of sentiment and sympathy, had appealed to this man, and he was about to pour out his heart in intimate confession. I said yes, I had been in love many times. I went on to speak of love as a noble emotion of which no man need be ashamed. I spoke at length and with fervour.

"R!" said Battling Billson.

Then, as if aware that he had been chattering in an undignified manner to a comparative stranger, he withdrew into the silence again and did not emerge till it was time to go to bed, when he said "Good night, mister," and disappeared. It was disappointing. Significant, perhaps, the conversation had been, but I had been rather hoping for something which could have been built up into a human document, entitled "The Soul of the Abysmal Brute," and sold to some editor for that real money which was always so badly needed in the home.

UKRIDGE and his *protégé* left next morning for Barnes, and, as that riverside resort was somewhat off my beat, I saw no more of the Battler until the fateful night at Wonderland. From time to time Ukridge would drop in at my rooms to purloin cigars and socks, and on these occasions he always spoke with the greatest confidence of his man's prospects. At first, it seemed, there had been a little difficulty owing to the other's rooted idea that plug tobacco was an indispensable adjunct to training: but towards the end of the first week the arguments of wisdom had prevailed and he had consented to abandon smoking until after his *début*. By this concession the issue seemed to Ukridge to have been sealed as a certainty, and he was in sunny mood as he borrowed the money from me to pay our fares to the Underground station at which the pilgrim alights who wishes to visit that Mecca of East-end boxing, Wonderland.

The Battler had preceded us, and when we arrived was in the dressing-room, stripped to a breath-taking semi-nudity. I had not supposed that it was possible for a man to be larger than was Mr. Billson when arrayed for the street, but in trunks and boxing shoes he looked like his big brother. Muscles resembling the hawsers of an Atlantic liner coiled down his arms and rippled along his massive shoulders. He seemed to dwarf altogether the by no means flimsy athlete who passed out of the room as we came in.

"That's the bloke," announced Mr. Billson, jerking his red head after this person.

We understood him to imply that the other was his opponent, and the spirit of confidence which had animated us waxed considerably. Where six of the pick of the Merchant Marine had failed, this stripling could scarcely hope to succeed.

"I been talkin' to 'im," said Battling Billson.

I took this unwonted garrulity to be due to a slight nervousness natural at such a moment.

"'E's 'ad a lot of trouble, that bloke," said the Battler.

The obvious reply was that he was now going to have a lot more, but before either of us could make it a hoarse voice announced that Squiffy and the Toff had completed their three-round bout and that the stage now waited for our nominee. We hurried to our seats. The necessity of taking a look at our man in his dressing-room had deprived us of the pleasure of witnessing the passage of arms between Squiffy and the Toff, but I gathered that it must have been lively and full of entertainment, for the audience seemed in excellent humour. All those who were not too busy eating jellied eels were babbling happily or whistling between their fingers to friends in distant parts of the hall. As Mr. Billson climbed into the ring in all the glory of his red hair and jumping muscles, the babble rose to a roar. It was plain that Wonderland had stamped our Battler with its approval on sight.

The audiences which support Wonderland are not disdainful of science. Neat footwork wins their commendation, and a skilful ducking of the head is greeted with knowing applause. But what they esteem most highly is the punch. And one sight of Battling Billson seemed to tell them that here was the Punch personified. They sent the fighters off to a howl of ecstasy, and settled back in their seats to enjoy the pure pleasure of seeing two of their fellow-men hitting each other very hard and often.

The howl died away.

I looked at Ukridge with concern. Was this the hero of Marseilles, the man who cleaned out bar-rooms and on whom undertakers fawned? Diffident was the only word to describe our Battler's behaviour in that opening round. He pawed lightly at his antagonist. He embraced him like a brother. He shuffled about the ring, innocuous.

"What's the matter with him?" I asked.

"He always starts slow," said Ukridge, but his concern was manifest. He fumbled nervously at the buttons of his mackintosh. The referee was warning Battling Billson. He was speaking to him like a disappointed father. In the cheaper and baser parts of the house enraged citizens were whistling "Comrades." Everywhere a chill had fallen on the house. That first fine fresh enthusiasm had died away, and the sounding of the gong for the end of the round was greeted with censorious cat-calls. As Mr. Billson lurched back to his corner, frank unfriendliness was displayed on all sides.

WITH the opening of the second round considerably more spirit was introduced into the affair. The same strange torpidity still held our Battler in its grip, but his opponent was another man. During round one he had seemed a little nervous and apprehensive. He had behaved as if he considered it prudent not to stir Mr. Billson. But now this distaste for direct action had left him. There was jauntiness in his demeanour as he moved to the centre of the ring; and, having reached it, he uncoiled a long left and smote Mr. Billson forcefully on the nose. Twice he smote him, and twice Mr. Billson blinked like one who has had bad news from home. The man who had had a lot of trouble leaned sideways and brought his right fist squarely against the Battler's ear.

All was forgotten and forgiven. A moment before the audience had been solidly anti-Billson. Now they were as unanimously pro. For these blows, while they appeared to have affected him not at all physically, seemed to have awakened Mr. Billson's better feelings as if somebody had turned on a tap. They had aroused in Mr. Billson's soul that zest for combat which had been so sadly to seek in round one. For an instant after the receipt of that buffet on the ear the Battler stood motionless on his flat feet, apparently in deep thought. Then, with the air of one who has suddenly remembered an important appointment, he plunged forward. Like an animated windmill he cast himself upon the bloke of troubles. He knocked him here, he bounced him there. He committed mayhem upon his person. He did everything to him that a man can do who is hampered with boxing-gloves, until presently the troubled one was leaning heavily against the ropes, his head hanging dazedly, his whole attitude that of a man who would just as soon let the matter drop. It only remained for the Battler to drive home the final punch, and a hundred enthusiasts, rising to their feet, were pointing out to him desirable locations for it.

But once more that strange diffidence had descended upon our representative. While every other man in the building seemed to know the correct procedure and was sketching it out in nervous English, Mr. Billson appeared the victim of doubt. He looked uncertainly at his opponent and inquiringly at the referee.

The referee, obviously a man of blunted sensibilities, was unresponsive. Do It Now was plainly his slogan. He was a business man, and he wanted his patrons to get good value for their money. He was urging Mr. Billson to make a thorough job of it. And finally Mr. Billson approached his man and drew back his right arm. Having done this, he looked over his shoulder once more at the referee.

It was a fatal blunder. The man who

had had a lot of trouble may have been in poor shape, but, like most of his profession, he retained, despite his recent misadventures, a reserve store of energy. Even as Mr. Billson turned his head, he reached down to the floor with his gloved right hand, then, with a final effort, brought it up in a majestic sweep against the angle of the other's jaw. And then, as the fickle audience, with swift change of sympathy, cheered him on, he buried his left in Mr. Billson's stomach on the exact spot where the well-dressed man wears the third button of his waistcoat.

Of all human experiences this of being smitten in this precise locality is the least agreeable. Battling Billson drooped like a stricken flower, settled slowly down, and spread himself out. He lay peacefully on his back with outstretched arms like a man floating in smooth water. His day's work was done.

A wailing cry rose above the din of excited patrons of sport endeavouring to explain to their neighbours how it had all happened. It was the voice of Ukridge mourning over his dead.

AT half-past eleven that night, as I was preparing for bed, a drooping figure entered my room. I mixed a silent, sympathetic Scotch and soda, and for awhile no word was spoken.

"How is the poor fellow?" I asked at length.

"He's all right," said Ukridge, listlessly. "I left him eating fish and chips at a coffee-stall."

"Bad luck his getting pipped on the post like that."

"Bad luck!" boomed Ukridge, throwing off his lethargy with a vigour that spoke of mental anguish. "What do you mean, bad luck? It was just dam' bone-headedness. Upon my Sam, it's a little hard. I invest vast sums in this man, I support him in luxury for two weeks, asking nothing of him in return except to sail in and knock somebody's head off, which he could have done in two minutes if he had liked, and he lets me down purely and simply because the other fellow told him that he had been up all night looking after his wife, who had burned her hand at the jam factory. Infernal sentimentalism!"

"Does him credit," I argued.

"Bah!"

"Kind hearts," I urged, "are more than coronets."

"Who the devil wants a pugilist to have a kind heart? What's the use of this man Billson being able to knock out an elephant if he's afflicted with this damned maudlin mushiness? Who ever heard of a mushy pugilist? It's the wrong spirit. It doesn't make for success."

"It's a handicap, of course," I admitted.

"What guarantee have I," demanded Ukridge, "that if I go to enormous trouble and expense getting him another match, he won't turn aside and brush away a silent tear in the first round because he's heard that the blighter's wife has got an ingrowing toenail?"

"You could match him only against bachelors."

"Yes, and the first bachelor he met would draw him into a corner and tell him his aunt was down with whooping-cough, and the chump would heave a sigh and stick his chin out to be walloped. A fellow's got no business to have red hair if he isn't going to live up to it. And yet," said Ukridge, wistfully, "I've seen that man—it was in a dance-hall at Naples—I've seen him take on at least eleven Italians simultaneously. But then, one of them had stuck a knife about three inches into his leg. He seems to need something like that to give him ambition."

"I don't see how you are going to arrange to have him knifed just before each fight."

"No," said Ukridge, mournfully.

"What are you going to do about his future? Have you any plans?"

"Nothing definite. My aunt was looking for a companion to attend to her correspondence and take care of the canary last time I saw her. I might try to get the job for him."

And with a horrid, mirthless laugh Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge borrowed five shillings and passed out into the night.

I DID not see Ukridge for the next few days, but I had news of him from our mutual friend George Tupper, whom I met prancing in uplifted mood down Whitehall.

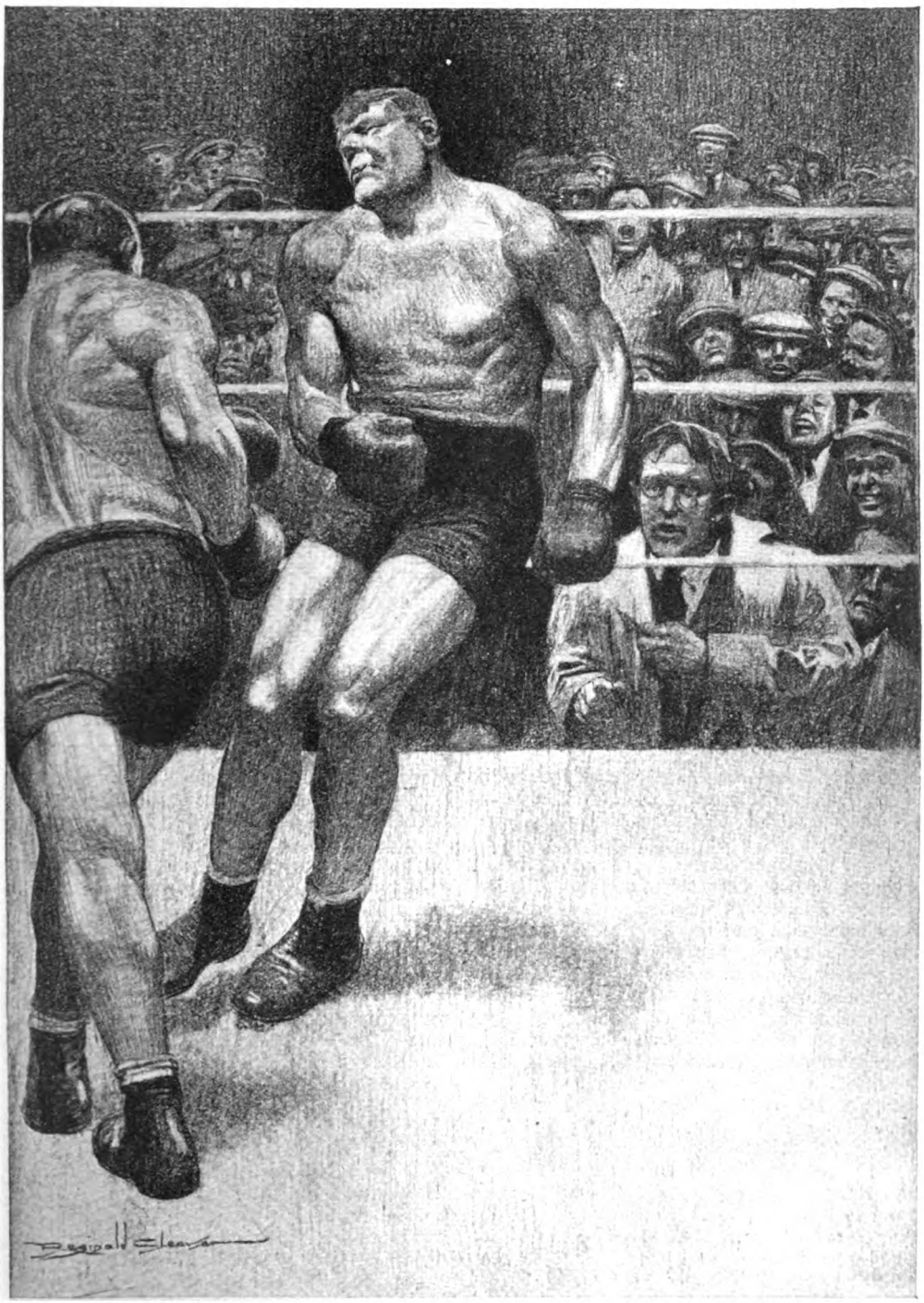
"I say," said George Tupper without preamble, and with a sort of dazed fervour, "they've given me an under-secretaryship."

I pressed his hand. I would have slapped him on the back, but one does not slap the backs of eminent Foreign Office officials in Whitehall in broad daylight, even if one has been at school with them.

"Congratulations," I said. "There is no one whom I would more gladly see under-secretarying. I heard rumours of this from Ukridge."

"Oh, yes, I remember I told him it might be coming off. Good old Ukridge! I met him just now and told him the news, and he was delighted."

"How much did he touch you for?"



Battling Billson drooped like a stricken flower and settled slowly down.
His day's work was done.

"Eh? Oh, only five pounds. Till Saturday. He expects to have a lot of money by then."

"Did you ever know the time when Ukridge didn't expect to have a lot of money?"

"I want you and Ukridge to come and have a bit of dinner with me to celebrate. How would Wednesday suit you?"

"Splendidly."

"Seven-thirty at the Regent Grill, then. Will you tell Ukridge?"

"I don't know where he's got to. I haven't seen him for nearly a week. Did he tell you where he was?"

"Out at some place at Barnes. What was the name of it?"

"The White Hart?"

"That's it."

"Tell me," I said, "how did he seem? Cheerful?"

"Very. Why?"

"The last time I saw him he was thinking of giving up the struggle. He had had reverses."

I PROCEEDED to the White Hart immediately after lunch. The fact that Ukridge was still at that hostelry and had regained his usual sunny outlook on life seemed to point to the fact that the clouds enveloping the future of Mr. Billson had cleared away, and that the latter's hat was still in the ring. That this was so was made clear to me directly I arrived. Inquiring for my old friend, I was directed to an upper room, from which, as I approached, there came a peculiar thudding noise. It was caused, as I perceived on opening the door, by Mr. Billson. Clad in flannel trousers and a sweater, he was earnestly pounding a large leather object suspended from a wooden platform. His manager, seated on a soap-box in a corner, regarded him the while with affectionate proprietorship.

"Hullo, old horse!" said Ukridge, rising as I entered. "Glad to see you."

The din of Mr. Billson's bag-punching, from which my arrival had not caused him to desist, was such as to render conversation difficult. We moved to the quieter retreat of the bar downstairs, where I informed Ukridge of the under-secretary's invitation.

"I'll be there," said Ukridge. "There's one thing about good old Billson, you can trust him not to break training if you take your eye off him. And, of course, he realizes that this is a big thing. It'll be the making of him."

"Your aunt is considering engaging him, then?"

"My aunt? What on earth are you talking about? Collect yourself, laddie."

"When you left me you were going to try to get him the job of looking after your aunt's canary."

"Oh, I was feeling rather sore then. That's all over. I had an earnest talk with the poor zimp, and he means business from now on. And so he ought to, dash it, with a magnificent opportunity like this."

"Like what?"

"We're on to a big thing now, laddie, the dickens of a big thing."

"I hope you've made sure the other man's a bachelor. Who is he?"

"Tod Bingham."

"Tod Bingham?" I groped in my memory. "You don't mean the middle-weight champion?"

"That's the fellow."

"You don't expect me to believe that you've got a match on with a champion already?"

"It isn't exactly a match. It's like this. Tod Bingham is going round the East-end halls offering two hundred quid to anyone who'll stay four rounds with him. Advertisement stuff. Good old Billson is going to unleash himself at the Shoreditch Empire next Saturday."

"Do you think he'll be able to stay four rounds?"

"Stay four rounds!" cried Ukridge. "Why, he could stay four rounds with a fellow armed with a Gatling-gun and a couple of pickaxes. That money's as good as in our pockets, laddie. And once we're through with this job, there isn't a boxing-place in England that won't jump at us. I don't mind telling you in confidence, old horse, that in a year from now I expect to be pulling in hundreds a week. Clean up a bit here first, you know, and then pop over to America and make an enormous fortune. Damme, I sha'n't know how to spend the money!"

"Why not buy some socks? I'm running a bit short of them."

"Now, laddie, laddie," said Ukridge, reprovingly, "need we strike a jarring note? Is this the moment to fling your beastly socks in an old friend's face? A broader-minded spirit is what I would like to see."

I WAS ten minutes late in arriving at the Regent Grill on the Wednesday of George Tupper's invitation, and the spectacle of George in person standing bare-headed at the Piccadilly entrance filled me with guilty remorse. George was the best fellow in the world, but the atmosphere of the Foreign Office had increased the tendency he had always had from boyhood to a sort of precise fussiness, and it upset him if his affairs did not run exactly on schedule. The thought that my unpunctuality should have

marred this great evening sent me hurrying towards him full of apologies.

"Oh, there you are," said George Tupper. "I say, it's too bad——"

"I'm awfully sorry. My watch——"

"Ukridge!" cried George Tupper, and I perceived that it was not I who had caused his concern.

"Isn't he coming?" I asked, amazed. The idea of Ukridge evading a free meal was one of those that seem to make the solid foundations of the world rock.

"He's come. And he's brought a girl with him!"

"A *girl!*"

"In pink, with yellow hair," wailed George Tupper. "What am I to do?"

I pondered the point.

"It's a weird thing for even Ukridge to have done," I said, "but I suppose you'll have to give her dinner."

"But the place is full of people I know, and this girl's so—so spectacular."

I felt for him deeply, but I could see no way out of it.

"You don't think I could say I had been taken ill?"

"It would hurt Ukridge's feelings."

"I should enjoy hurting Ukridge's feelings, curse him!" said George Tupper, fervently.

"And it would be an awful slam for the girl, whoever she is."

George Tupper sighed. His was a chivalrous nature. He drew himself up as if bracing himself for a dreadful ordeal.

"Oh, well, I suppose there's nothing to do," he said. "Come along. I left them drinking cocktails in the lounge."

George had not erred in describing Ukridge's addition to the festivities as spectacular. Flamboyant would have been a suitable word. As she preceded us down the long dining-room, her arm linked in George Tupper's—she seemed to have taken a liking to George—I had ample opportunity for studying her, from her patent-leather shoes to the mass of golden hair beneath her picture-hat. She had a loud, clear voice, and she was telling George Tupper the rather intimate details of an internal complaint which had recently troubled an aunt of hers. If George had been the family physician, she could not have been franker; and I could see a dull glow spreading over his shapely ears.

Perhaps Ukridge saw it, too, for he seemed to experience a slight twinge of conscience.

"I have an idea, laddie," he whispered, "that old Tuppy is a trifle peeved at my bringing Flossie along. If you get a chance, you might just murmur to him that it was military necessity."

"Who is she?" I asked.

"I told you about her. Flossie, the barmaid at the Crown in Kennington. Billson's *fiancée*."

I looked at him in amazement.

"Do you mean to tell me that you're courting death by flirting with Battling Billson's girl?"

"My dear old man, nothing like that," said Ukridge, shocked. "The whole thing is, I've got a particular favour to ask of her—rather a rummy request—and it was no good springing it on her in cold blood. There had to be a certain amount of champagne in advance, and my funds won't run to champagne. I'm taking her on to the Alhambra after dinner. I'll look you up to-night and tell you all about it."

We then proceeded to dine. It was not one of the pleasantest meals of my experience. The future Mrs. Billson prattled agreeably throughout, and Ukridge assisted her in keeping the conversation alive; but the shattered demeanour of George Tupper would have taken the sparkle out of any banquet. From time to time he pulled himself together and endeavoured to play the host, but for the most part he maintained a pale and brooding silence; and it was a relief when Ukridge and his companion rose to leave.

"Well!——" began George Tupper in a strangled voice, as they moved away down the aisle.

I lit a cigar and sat back dutifully to listen.

UKRIDGE arrived in my rooms at midnight, his eyes gleaming through their pince-nez with a strange light. His manner was exuberant.

"It's all right," he said.

"I'm glad you think so."

"Did you explain to Tuppy?"

"I didn't get a chance. He was talking too hard."

"About me?"

"Yes. He said everything I've always felt about you, only far, far better than I could ever have put it."

Ukridge's face clouded for a moment, but cheerfulness returned.

"Oh, well, it can't be helped. He'll simmer down in a day or two. It had to be done, laddie. Life and death matter. And it's all right. Read this."

I took the letter he handed me. It was written in a scrawly hand.

"What's this?"

"Read it, laddie. I think it will meet the case."

I read.

"'*Wilberforce.*'

"Who on earth's Wilberforce?"

"I told you that was Billson's name."

"Oh, yes."

I returned to the letter.

"'*Wilberforce,—*

'*I take my pen in hand to tell you that I can never be yours. You will no doubt be surprised to hear that I love another and a better man, so that it can never be. He loves me, and he is a better man than you.*

'*Hoping this finds you in the pink as it leaves me at present,*

'*Yours faithfully,*

'FLORENCE BURNS.'"

"I told her to keep it snappy," said Ukridge.

"Well, she's certainly done it," I replied

handing back the letter. "I'm sorry. From the little I saw of her, I thought her a nice girl—for Billson. Do you happen to know the other man's address? Because it would be a kindly act to send him a post-card advising him to leave England for a year or two."

"The Shoreditch Empire will find him this week."

"What!"

"The other man is Tod Bingham."

"Tod Bingham!" The drama of the situation moved me. "Do you mean to say that Tod Bingham is in love with Battling Billson's girl?"

"No. He's never seen her!"

"What do you mean?"

Ukridge sat down creakingly on the sofa. He slapped my knee with sudden and uncomfortable violence.

"Laddie," said Ukridge, "I will tell you all. Yesterday afternoon I found old Billson reading a copy of the *Daily Sportsman*. He isn't much of a reader as a rule, so I was rather interested to know what had gripped him. And do you know what it was, old horse?"

"I do not."

"It was an article about Tod Bingham. One of those damned sentimental blurbs they print about pugilists nowadays, saying what a good chap he was in private life and how he always sent a telegram to his old mother after each fight and gave her half the purse. Damme, there ought to be a censorship of the Press. These blighters don't mind *what* they print. I don't suppose Tod Bingham has *got* an old mother, and if he has I'll bet he doesn't give her a bob. There were tears in that chump Billson's eyes as he showed me the article. Salt tears, laddie! 'Must be a nice feller!' he said. Well, I ask you! I mean to say, it's a bit thick when the man you've been pouring out money for and watching over like a baby sister starts getting sorry for a champion three days before he's due to fight him. A champion, mark you! It was bad enough his getting mushy about that fellow at Wonderland, but when it came to being soft-hearted over Tod Bingham some-

As Flossie preceded us, her arm linked in George Tupper's, Ukridge whispered: "I have an idea, laddie, that old Tuppy is a trifle peeved at my bringing Flossie along."

thing had to be done. Well, you know me. Brain like a buzz-saw. I saw the only way of counteracting this pernicious stuff was to get him so mad with Tod Bingham that he would forget all about his old mother, so I suddenly thought, Why not get Flossie to pretend that Bingham had cut him out with her? Well, it's not the sort of thing you can ask a girl to do without preparing the ground a bit, so I brought her along to Tuppy's dinner. It was a master-stroke, laddie. There's nothing softens the delicately-nurtured like a good dinner, and there's no denying that old Tuppy did us well. She agreed the moment I put the thing to her, and sat down and wrote that letter without a blink. I think she thinks it's all a jolly practical joke. She's a light-hearted girl."

"Must be."

"It'll give poor old Billson a bit of a jar for the time being, I suppose, but it'll make him spread himself on Saturday night, and he'll be perfectly happy on Sunday morning when she tells him she didn't mean it and he realizes that he's got a hundred quid of Tod Bingham's in his trousers pocket."

"I thought you said it was two hundred quid that Bingham was offering."

"I get a hundred," said Ukridge, dreamily.

"The only flaw is, the letter doesn't give the other man's name. How is Billson to know it's Tod Bingham?"

"Why, damme, laddie, do use your intelligence. Billson isn't going to sit and yawn when he gets that letter. He'll buzz straight down to Kennington and ask Flossie."

"And then she will give the whole thing away."

"No, she won't. I slipped her a couple of quid to promise she wouldn't. And that reminds me, old man, it has left me a bit short, so if you could possibly manage——"

"Good night," I said.

"But, laddie——"

"And God bless you," I added, firmly.

THE Shoreditch Empire is a roomy house, but it was crowded to the doors when I reached it on the Saturday night. In normal circumstances I suppose there would always have been a large audience on a Saturday, and this evening the lure of Tod Bingham's personal appearance had drawn more than capacity. In return for my shilling I was accorded the privilege of standing against the wall at the back, a position from which I could not see a great deal of the performance.

From the occasional flashes which I got of the stage between the heads of my neighbours, however, and from the generally restless and impatient attitude of the audience I gathered that I was not missing much. The programme of the Shoreditch Empire that week was essentially a one-man affair. The patrons had the air of suffering the preliminary acts as unavoidable obstacles that stand between them and the head-liner. It was Tod Bingham whom they had come to see, and they were not cordial to the unfortunate serio-comics, tramp cyclists, jugglers, acrobats, and ballad singers who intruded themselves during the earlier part of the evening. The cheer that arose as the curtain fell on a dramatic sketch came from the heart, for the next number on the programme was that of the star.

A stout man in evening dress with a red handkerchief worn ambassadorially athwart his shirt-front stepped out from the wings.

"Ladies and gentlemen!"

"'Ush!" cried the audience.

"Ladies and gentlemen!"

A Voice: "Good ole Tod!" ("Cheese it!")

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the ambassador for the third time. He scanned the house apprehensively. "Deeply regret have unfortunate disappointment to announce. Tod Bingham unfortunately unable to appear before you to-night."

A howl like the howl of wolves balked of their prey or of an amphitheatre full of Roman citizens on receipt of the news that the supply of lions had run out greeted these words. We stared at each other with a wild surmise. Could this thing be, or was it not too thick for human belief?"

"Wot's the matter with 'im?" demanded the gallery, hoarsely.

"Yus, wot's the matter with 'im?" echoed we of the better element on the lower floor.

The ambassador sidled uneasily towards the prompt entrance. He seemed aware that he was not a popular favourite.

"'E 'as 'ad an unfortunate accident," he declared, nervousness beginning to sweep away his aitches wholesale. "On 'is way 'ere to this 'all 'e was unfortunately run into by a truck, sustaining bruises and contusions which render 'im unfortunately unable to appear before you to-night. I beg to announce that 'is place will be taken by Professor Devine, who will render 'is marvellous imitations of various birds and familiar animals. Ladies and gentlemen," concluded the ambassador, stepping nimbly off the stage, "I thank you one and all."

The curtain rose and a dapper individual with a waxed moustache skipped on.

"Ladies and gentlemen, my first imitation will be of that well-known songster, the common thrush—better known to some of you per'aps as the throstle. And in connection with my performance I wish to

state that I 'ave nothing whatsoever in my mouth. The effects which I produce——"

I withdrew, and two-thirds of the audience started to do the same. From behind us, dying away as the doors closed, came the plaintive note of the common thrush feebly competing with that other and sterner bird which haunts those places of entertainment where audiences are critical and swift to take offence.

OUT in the street a knot of Shoreditch's younger set were hanging on the lips of an excited orator in a battered hat and trousers which had been made for a larger man. Some stirring tale which he was telling held them spellbound. Words came raggedly through the noise of the traffic.

"——like this. Then 'e 'its 'im another like that. Then they start—on the side of the jor——"

"Pass along, there," interrupted an official voice. "Come on, there, pass along."

The crowd thinned and resolved itself into its elements. I found myself moving down the street in company with the wearer of the battered hat. Though we had not been formally introduced, he seemed to consider me a suitable recipient for his tale. He enrolled me at once as a nucleus for a fresh audience.

"'E comes up, this bloke does, just as Tod is goin' in at the stage-door——"

"Tod?" I queried.

"Tod Bingham. 'E comes up just as 'e's goin' in at the stage-door, and 'e says 'Ere!' and Tod says 'Yus?' and this bloke 'e says 'Put 'em up!' and Tod says 'Put wot up?' and this bloke says 'Yer 'ands,' and Tod says 'Wot, me?'—sort of surprised. An' the next minute they're fightin' all over the shop."

"But surely Tod Bingham was run over by a truck?"

The man in the battered hat surveyed me with the mingled scorn and resentment which the devout bestow on those of heretical views.

"Truck! 'E wasn't run over by no truck. Wot mikes yer fink 'e was run over by a truck? Wot 'ud 'e be doin' bein' run over by a truck? 'E 'ad it put across 'im by this red-'eaded bloke, same as I'm tellin' yer."

A great light shone upon me.

"Red-headed?" I cried

"Yus."

"A big man?"

"Yus."

"And he put it across Tod Bingham?"

"Put it across 'im proper. 'Ad to go 'ome in a keb, Tod did. Funny a bloke that could fight like that bloke could fight 'adn't the sense to go and do it on the stige and get some money for it. That's wot I think."

Across the street an arc-lamp shed its cold rays. And into its glare there strode a man draped in a yellow mackintosh. The light gleamed on his pince-nez and lent a gruesome pallor to his set face. It was Ukridge retreating from Moscow.

"Others," I said, "are thinking the same."

And I hurried across the road to administer what feeble consolation I might. There are moments when a fellow needs a friend.

(Another story by Mr. P. G. Wodehouse will appear next month.)

CONAN DOYLE'S REMINISCENCES.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE has written his Reminiscences for publication in "The Strand Magazine." Sir Arthur gives a full account of his early life, of his setting up as a doctor without patients, of his living on a shilling a day, of how he began to write, of his early failures, of the coming of Sherlock Holmes and all his subsequent success.

Sir Arthur has been a great traveller and a lover of almost every sort of sport, while he has, of course, been well acquainted with the most eminent and interesting men of the day. His Reminiscences of George Meredith, Barrie, Lloyd George, Lord Balfour, Rudyard Kipling, Henry Irving, Bernard Shaw, Robert Louis Stevenson, and others make absorbing reading.

In fact, the whole of Sir Arthur's Reminiscences will provide a rich treat for the readers of "The Strand Magazine," in which their publication will commence in an early number.

TETHERSTONES

by

ETHEL M. DELL

ILLUSTRATED BY
P. B. HICKLING

PART II.

CHAPTER IX.

THE LETTER.

"AT the Stones again to-night!" All through that morning in the cornfield the words were running in Frances' brain. She tried to sketch, but her hand seemed to have lost its cunning, and there were times when a great trembling seized her. His letter she had thrust out of her mind. She had not read it, nor had she greatly desired to know what it contained. But his message was different, and again with the words she seemed to hear that rushing of an unseen car, and recalled the man, his bearing half-insolent, half-cynical, the curious persistence with which he had pursued her, the nameless attraction of his personality. She did not want to answer his message. She did not want to meet him. But yet—but yet—deep in the very heart of her she knew that a meeting was inevitable. The idea of writing to him presented itself, but she discarded it with an even greater distaste. No written word from her was in his possession now, nor should it ever be. She wanted to thrust away this unclean thing that had come into her life so that no vestige of it remained.

After a while Oliver came up with a smile on his merry face to talk to her, but he had scarcely reached her when there came the sound of a horse's feet in the lane, and Dr. Square appeared at the gate.

"They told me I should find you here," he said, and came in and sat down beside her, while Oliver saluted and went away.

She told the doctor of her drive in the dog-cart to the Stones, and he expressed some surprise that Arthur had taken her there.

"He usually avoids the place like the plague," he said.

Her curiosity awakened. "Do you know why?" she said.

"Yes, I know," said Dr. Square.

She looked at him. "Is it a secret?"

She thought his red, wholesome face had a dubious look, but he answered her without actual hesitation. "Not that I know of. Naturally they don't talk about it here at Tetherstones. It was the scene of a very unhappy tragedy some six years ago." His eyes rested upon Ruth busy among the cornsheaves at a little distance. "It was one of the sisters," he said, "the child's mother—a lovely girl—a lovely girl. She died up there in a blizzard one winter night. She was out of her mind at the time. She took the little one with her. When we found them, she was frozen stiff, but the child still lived. Poor mite—poor little girl! She'd better have gone with her mother."

"Oh, why do you say that?" Frances said. "She is happy. There are plenty to love her."

The doctor's eyes dwelt very tenderly upon the little figure. "I say it because it is true," he said. "She is not like other children, Miss Thorold. She never will be.

Copyright, 1923, by Ethel M. Dell.

She is just—' a little bit of heaven ' strayed down to earth. She is one of those the gods love."

Frances would not question him further concerning the Dermot family, for some sense of loyalty restrained her. But when he was gone, she pondered over the matter.

Midday came, and with it Lucy and Nell to take her back to the house. It was no great distance across the field to the garden, but it taxed her powers somewhat, for the ground was rough. She was glad when they reached the shade of the cedar tree and she could sit down on the bench beneath it to rest.

After a brief interval she continued her journey to the house, where Maggie joined them with kindly concern on her rosy face.

The kitchen was oak-raftered and possessed an immense open fire-place with a brick oven at the side. Frances went in and was welcomed by Mrs. Dermot in her gentle, tired fashion, and made to sit down in a high-backed, wooden arm-chair.

The girls buzzed around her, and she had almost begun to forget her own pressing problem in the homely atmosphere when a sudden angry shout rang through the house, and in a moment every voice in the kitchen was hushed.

Then from the stone passage outside came a voice, Arthur's voice, short and peremptory.

"I'll stand no more of this, and you know it. Let me pass!"

There was a brief pause, then an answering voice—the broken, quavering voice of an old man. "I have no wish to keep you here. You come into my room, tamper with my belongings, threaten me. I only ask you to go. What have I done that I should be treated like this?"

"What have you done?" A sound that was inexpressibly bitter followed the words. "Well, not much on this occasion, perhaps. But I warn you, it had better not happen again. I will have no more of it. You understand?"

"No." Sudden dignity dispelled all agitation in the rejoinder. "I do not understand how my son, who, if he is not a gentleman, has at least had the upbringing of one, as well as the advantage of good birth, can bring himself to treat his father with a brutality that he would not display towards the dog in the stable. I protest against your behaviour, though I am as fully aware as you are that I have no remedy."

"None, sir, none." Again that horrible jarring note was in Arthur's voice. "It would be as well if you always bore that in mind. I am the master here, as I have told you before."

"You are an infernal blackguard," said the old man, in a voice that was deadly cold. "Now leave my room!"

There came the instant closing of a door, a step outside, and Arthur entered. The veins stood out on his forehead; his face was terrible. He looked round the kitchen, paused for a moment with his eyes upon Frances as if he would speak; then, without a word, took a glass from the dresser, and went out to a pump in the yard.

He entered again almost immediately, the tumbler half-full in his hand. He went straight to his mother and murmured something in a low voice. She shook her head in silence. He drained the glass and set it down. Again his look went to Frances, and again he seemed on the verge of speech. Then a faint sob came from Lucy, and he swung round upon her with a scowl.

She recoiled from him, and instantly Nell, the valiant, sprang into the breach. "Oh, for goodness' sake, Arthur, stop ramping!" she said. "Go away if you can't control yourself, and come back when you feel better! We'll have dinner ready in twenty minutes."

"Then you can send mine out to the farmyard," he rejoined curtly. "I'll wait for it there."

He was gone with the words, and there went up a breath of relief from the kitchen at his exit.

FRANCES passed on, feeling oddly shaken. As she rounded the corner of the stairs, Oliver came clattering in from the back premises and overtook her. He stopped her without ceremony.

"I just want a word with you, Miss Thorold. Do you mind? Don't think it's cheek on my part. It's too urgent for that."

She stood and faced him. "Oliver, what's the matter?"

"Oh, don't worry!" he said. "Don't be scared! It's only this. A friend of yours was just outside here to-day, asking for you."

"Yes," Frances said. "But what—what——"

"What business is it of mine?" he said. "It isn't my business, that's straight. But you get that friend of yours out of the way—quick! Understand? There's no time to be lost. If he stays in the neighbourhood there'll be trouble. You tell him to go, Miss Thorold! It's a friend's advice, and for Heaven's sake take it!"

He paused and wiped his forehead on his shirt-sleeve. She stood and looked at him, conscious of a feeling of dread that made her physically cold. What was the meaning of these tumults and warnings,

these mysterious under-currents that seemed to be perpetually drawing her towards tragedy? What was the direful secret of this sinister house?

Oliver saw her distress, and dismissed his own with a jerk. "Don't be upset!" he said. "There's no harm done yet—not so far as I know. But don't let him hang round any longer! If Arthur were to get a sight of him——" He broke off. "That's all. Hope we shall see you in the field again to-morrow. It's good weather for harvesting. We ought to be carrying by the end of the week, if it lasts."

She knew from his tone that he was speaking for the benefit of a third person, but she did not turn her head to look. She knew without that that Arthur was standing at the end of the passage, and she began to ascend the stairs with a distinct feeling that escape was imperative. Oliver went away into the kitchen, and she rounded the curve of the old staircase and began to quicken her pace. Then, with a sudden start of consternation, she heard the tread of Arthur's feet below, and knew that he was coming up behind her.

The door of her room stood open, but she lacked the power to close it as she entered. She could only stagger to the nearest chair and fall into it, panting.

He came on up the stairs, reached the open door, and stopped.

"Miss Thorold!" he said.

Then he must have seen her condition, for he came in without further ceremony.

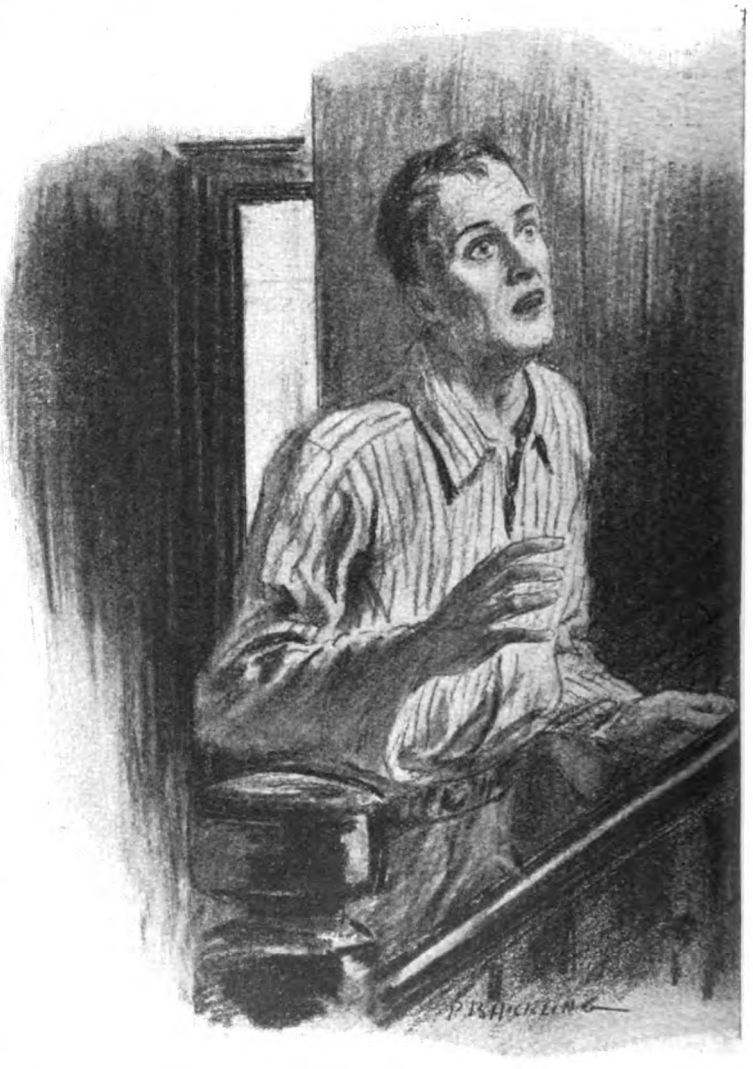
"You've been frightened," he said.

She could not answer him because of the wild palpitation of her heart. He bent over her; then suddenly knelt beside her, and she felt the strong grip of his hand on hers.

"There's nothing to frighten you," he said, in his deep voice, and she knew that for some reason he was moved.

She leaned her head against the back of the chair, battling with her weakness.

"I am not very strong yet," she managed to say.



"You tell him to go, Miss Thorold! It's a friend's advice, and for Heaven's sake take it!"

"I know—I know! You'll be better presently. Don't take any notice of these trifles!"

The gentleness of his voice amazed her; it had the sound of a half-suppressed appeal, and something within her stirred in answer.

"You are very good to me," she said.

"Good! To you!" There was almost a passionate note in his reply. His grip upon her hand tightened, and then in a moment he seemed to control himself, and very slowly he set her free and rose. "What I wanted to say to you," he said, "is just that I am sorry that you should have been upset in any way by any unfortunate family disagreements. I don't know what Oliver was saying to you on the subject; he probably told you that they are by no means unusual. But please take my word for it that it shall not happen again if I can possibly prevent it, and make allowances where you can!"

She smiled at him without speaking, and somehow his answering smile sent a quick thrill to her heart.

He turned to go, then abruptly wheeled back to her. "One thing more. I've found your letter—the one you lost in the garden. Do you want it back, or may I destroy it?"

"I think I had better have it," she said.

"You are sure?" His eyes met hers with the old challenging look, and her own fell beneath them.

Nevertheless she held out her hand. "Please!" she said.

The next moment she found the missing letter thrust into her fingers, but she did not even look at it. She was staring at his retreating figure as he went out and closed the door sharply behind him.

CHAPTER X.

REVELATION.

SHE had it in her hand at last—that letter which had caused her so much doubt and anxiety. She sat there holding it after the closing of the door, wondering, puzzled, troubled. He had found it—he must have found it—under the cedar tree the night before. Why had he kept it back? Or, having kept it, why did he give it to her now? Suspicion stabbed her, and she turned the envelope over. Had it been opened? It was impossible to say.

An odd thought came to her, born of that strange new note of appeal that she had begun to hear in his voice—a thought which sent the blood to her face in a great wave and for a moment almost dazed her. Was it jealousy that had prompted him? He had known that her letter had caused her agitation, that it was from another man. He had almost openly done his best to counteract that other man's influence upon her. He had taken her to the Stones only that morning in the hope of inducing her to be frank with him regarding her adventure there. And then Oliver's warning flashed upon her, illuminating all the rest. With a gasp she faced the situation, suspicion merging into certainty, amazing but irrefutable. He cared for her, this extraordinary man who ruled at Tetherstones with so heavy a hand. For some reason wholly inexplicable to her, his fancy had lighted upon her—just as had Montague Rotherby's in an idle hour. But with what a difference!

She opened her letter almost absent-mindedly, and began to read it with an interest as impersonal as she would have bestowed upon the letter of an employer.

"Circe—beloved enchantress," so the letter ran. "Am I to have no word from you? It is getting urgent, and I have news for you. First, let me make a confession! When I left you that evening at the cottage, I stole one of your sketches—the one of the stepping-stones. I sent it to a friend of mine in town, and have to-day received it back. He speaks very highly of it, and declares you have a living in your talent, if not a fortune. How does that appeal to you? The old woman tells me you are better, but that you are staying on at Tetherstones. I must see you somewhere where we can talk undisturbed. Will you come to the Stones to-night at ten? I will wait for you there.—Yours with all my love as ever, M. R."

So that was why he had written a second time! He had news for her. Such news as she had little expected—news that made her heart leap wildly.

No further doubt existed in her mind with regard to meeting him. She would certainly meet him. She put her letter away with a business-like precision that wholly banished her agitation. It was the best tonic that she could possibly have received. To make her own living successfully seemed to her at that moment the goal of all desire.

THE arrival of Nell with her tray diverted her thoughts. Nell's face was flushed, her eyes round and indignant.

"A nice family of wild beasts you must think us!" she said, as she dumped the tray on a corner of the dressing-table. "I suppose you're making plans to leave us by the next train. It's enough to make you."

Frances laid a friendly hand on her arm. "I couldn't think anything horrid of you if I tried," she said.

"Thank you," said Nell, somewhat pathetically. "It's rather hard to be judged by one's men-folk, I sometimes think. They can be such beasts."

"I expect it depends how you take them," said Frances, practically.

Nell looked at her with a hint of envy. "It's all right for you," she said. "You're not under any man's heel."

"I have been," said Frances, with a sudden memory of the Bishop. "But I never shall be again."

"You will be if you marry," said Nell.

Whereat Frances laughed with a curious light-heartedness. "But women of my age think twice before they sign away their liberty."

"Your age!" Nell stared. "Why, I thought you were quite young!" she said, then blushed violently and turned to go. "Oh, I suppose I oughtn't to have said that—but it's true!"

The door closed behind her upon the words, and Frances was left still laughing. "What can have come to them all?" she said. "Me—young! If I am, it's something in the air that has made me so. I never used to be!"

And then a fantastic thought came to her, checking her laughter. She had never been young before. She had never had time to be young. Could it be possible that for her, here at Tetherstones, life had but just begun? If so—if so—was she right to turn away from aught that life might have to offer?

CHAPTER XI.

FAILURE.

WELL as she knew the way to the Stones from the farm, she had never trodden it save on that one occasion in the fog when Ruth had been her guide. The whole distance could not be more than half a mile, she reflected, as she sat in her

room that evening, considering the task that lay before her.

She hoped to accomplish it unobserved, for she knew that the entire household retired by nine, and some of its members even before that hour, in view of the early rising that the farm-work entailed; and since she had no intention of allowing her interview with Rotherby to be unduly prolonged, she anticipated that the whole adventure need not take more than half an hour, or at the most three-quarters.

The coming of Dolly at nine o'clock was usually the signal of the general retirement of the rest of the family, but Dolly was a little late that night. When she came to her eventually, it was nearly half an hour later than usual. Frances was sitting by her open window, watching the moon rise.

"So you're not in bed yet!" said Dolly. "I was afraid you would be tired of waiting."

"Oh, no," Frances said. "I can quite easily put myself to bed, thank you. Have you had a good day? Has all gone well?"

"Oh, yes, on the whole. We were rather surprised to come upon Oliver in Fordestown on our way back. It isn't like him to absent himself without permission, especially at such a time as harvest. Of course, we thought Arthur had given him leave. There will probably be a row when he comes back, that's all. He generally manages to get round Arthur, but I don't think he will this time."

"But what can happen?" questioned Frances quickly.

Dolly laughed briefly. "Well, he can find himself locked out for the night, that's all—unless Arthur sits up for him. But I should hardly think he'll do that. He has got to be up early himself."

"What will he do if he is locked out?" asked Frances.

"Probably one of the girls—Maggie—would let him in if the coast were clear. If not, he would have to sleep out somewhere. That wouldn't kill him," said Dolly cheerfully. "Well, if you are sure you can manage all right——"

"Quite, thank you," said Frances. "Good night!"

FRANCES was once more alone. She blew out the candle that Dolly had lighted and settled down again to wait.

Dolly's news was disquieting. She had hoped that all the household would have been wrapped in slumber before the time arrived for her own expedition, but it seemed that this was not to be. She wondered how she would manage to elude observation. She hated the thought of creeping out by stealth, but there seemed to be no help for it. Time was getting short, and if Arthur proposed to sit up for the defaulter she would have no choice but to risk it.

Yet she smiled to herself as cautiously she opened her door. A certain spirit of adventure had entered into her; her brain was cool, her nerves steady.

The passage was in darkness, but a light was dimly burning at the foot of the stairs. Arthur was sitting up, then. She wondered what would happen when Oliver returned—if there would be high words between the two men, if Oliver would manage to vindicate himself, or carry the situation with a high hand as on the previous occasion which she had witnessed. She crept to the head of the stairs and paused.

Suddenly there sounded a movement from below, followed by the tread of a man's feet on the stairs.

The impulse to retreat seized upon Frances, but in a moment she restrained it. The chances were very much against his seeing her, and she had fled from him once that day. Pride came to the aid of her courage, and she remained where she was.

He came up the stairs heavily, as if weary. He carried no light, but he had not extinguished the glimmer below. Presumably he had left this for Oliver's benefit. Farther along the passage the moonlight filtered in through a latticed window, but the stairs themselves were in almost complete darkness.

Slowly he ascended them. He was close to her now, and involuntarily she shrank from him, pressing harder against the wall. She felt her heart begin to beat fast and loud, and wondered if he would hear it in the silence. But he came on and passed her without a sign. Then, as she still stood there palpitating against the wall, she heard him go deliberately along the passage and turn aside into his own room.

It was her opportunity and she seized it. Swiftly she gathered herself together, stood a second poised and listening, then, hearing nothing, began to descend the stairs.

They creaked beneath her feet notwithstanding her utmost caution, but no sound came to her from above, and she went on with increasing rapidity.

Reaching the foot, she discovered that the glimmer of light came from the half-open kitchen door. Evidently a lamp was burning within, and that seemed to indicate that Arthur meant to return. But her way lay in the opposite direction, and she slipped into the dark passage that led to the parlour.

She thought she knew the place by heart, but there was one thing she had forgotten. Half-way to the parlour, in an angle of the wall, there stood an old oak settle, and into this she suddenly ran headlong. The settle scraped on the stone floor with the force

of the impact, and she herself fell over it with arms outstretched, bruised and half-stunned with the violence of the collision. It all took place so rapidly, and her dismay was such that she scarcely knew what had happened to her ere the sound of feet on the stairs told her that she was discovered. She sank down in a quivering heap on the floor, gasping and helpless, no longer attempting any concealment. And in another moment Arthur had reached her, was bending over her, feeling for her, lifting her.

She gave herself into his hold with a curious sense of fatalism.

CHAPTER XII.

THE FIRES OF HELL.

HE carried her without words to the kitchen and set her down there in the leathern arm-chair. She had a glimpse of his face as he did so, and it was as it had been earlier in the day—a mask of anger.

He did not speak to her, but went to a cupboard in the wall and took therefrom a bottle and a glass. Weak and trembling from her fall, she watched him pour out a small dose of spirit and add thereto water from a jug on the dresser. Then he came back to her, stooped, and put it to her lips. His arm was behind her head as she drank in mute submission.

The dose steadied her, and she sat up. His silence oppressed her like a crushing weight. She felt it must be broken at all costs.

"I am so sorry to have given you this trouble," she said. "You will think me very strange, but I am afraid I can't explain anything. I will go back to my room."

He set down the glass with decision and spoke. "I am sorry to appear unreasonable—or anything else unpleasant. But I am afraid I can't let you go back to your room at present."

She turned and gazed at him. "What on earth do you mean?"

His look came to her, and his anger seemed to smite her as with physical force. "My reasons—like yours—won't bear explanation," he said.

She gripped the arms of her chair. Had she heard him aright? The thing was unbelievable. "Are you mad?" she said.

He was standing squarely in front of her. He smiled—a smile that turned her cold. "That I can't tell you. What is madness? I know I have got you here—in my power. And I know I mean to keep you. If that is madness, well"—he lifted his shoulders slightly, the old characteristic movement—"then I am mad."

She stared at him in growing apprehension. Was the man sober? The doubt flashed through her mind and vanished. He was so deadly calm in his anger.

But her spirit was reviving. It was not her way to submit meekly to the mastery of any man. Very suddenly she rose and faced him. "This is more than I will endure," she said, speaking briefly and clearly. "Nothing on earth shall keep me in this room against my will!"

She needed to pass him to reach the door into the passage. He stood squarely in her path. She heard him draw a hard breath.

"There is such a thing as brute force," he said.

She looked him straight in the eyes. "You wouldn't dare!"

His eyes leaped to flame, holding hers. "Don't tempt me!" he said, between his teeth.

That checked her for a moment. Something seemed to clutch at her heart. Then pride leaped up full-armed, and she flung it from her. She laughed in his face.

"Do you think you are going to treat me as one of your slaves?" she said contemptuously, and made to pass him.

He flung out an arm before her. His voice came low and passionate. It was as if locked doors were opening. She felt the scorching heat behind.

"If you attempt to pass me—you do it at your own risk," he said.

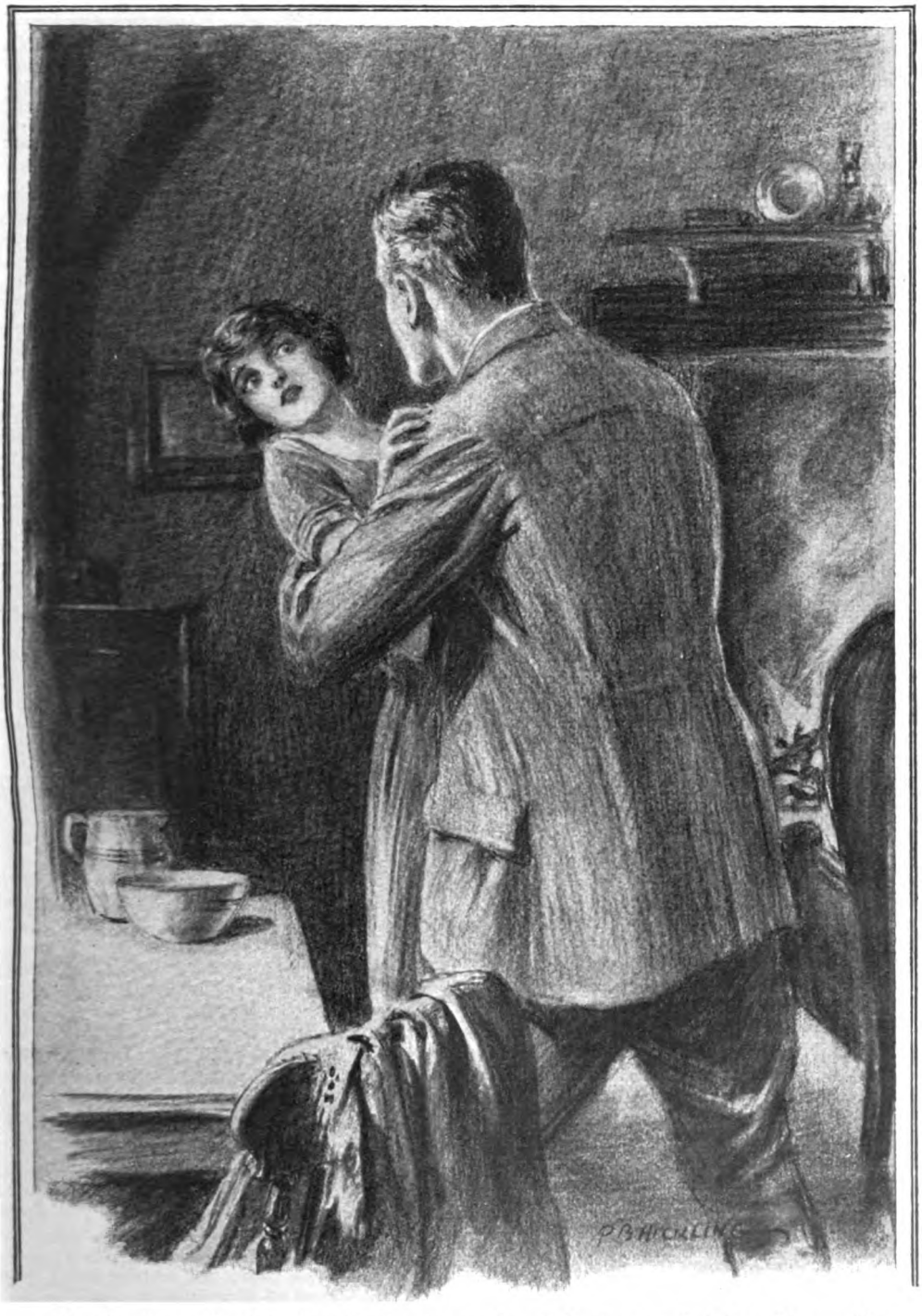
THERE followed a silence that was somehow appalling. She stood as one paralysed. She would have returned to her chair, but lacked the strength.

She spoke at length. "I don't understand you. What is the matter?"

He made a harsh sound in his throat; it was as though he choked a laugh. "Do you really wish me to be more explicit? If so, by all means let us drop all subterfuge and come down to bare facts! Why are you trying to creep out of the house by stealth? Answer me!"

She lifted her head and faced him. "What is that to you? Does the fact that I have been your guest—your helpless and involuntary guest—entitle you to control my movements or to demand an account of them? I resent your attitude, and I absolutely repudiate your authority. You may keep me here against my will—if you are coward enough. But you will never—however long you wait—induce me to confide my affairs to you. And let me tell you this! When I leave this house, I shall never—no, never—enter it again!"

Fiercely she flung the words, answering challenge with challenge, realizing that it was only by launching herself on the torrent of her anger that she could hope to make



She fought against him breathlessly, feeling that if his lips touched hers life would never be endurable again.

any headway against him. For he stood in her path like an opposing force, waiting to hurl her back.

He spoke, and his words cut with a stabbing accuracy straight through the armour of her indignation. "Had I known —what I now know," he said, "what I might have known from the beginning from the manner of your coming, I certainly would not have entertained you in this house. I have my sisters to think of."

"Ah!" she said, and no more; for words failed her. The horror of it overwhelmed her utterly and completely. The walls of the room seemed to be closing in upon her. She felt her feet slip away from under her. Desperately she tried to recover her balance, failed, sought to cling to the table, but felt her hands could find no hold upon the hard wood.

And then there came the consciousness of his arms surrounding her. He lifted her, he held her to him, and she felt again the awful flame of his look, consuming her.

"And I loved you!" he said. "I—loved you!"

She fought against him breathlessly, feeling that if his lips touched hers life would never be endurable again. But he mastered her without apparent effort. He conquered her slowly, with a fiendish precision that was as iron to her soul. With that dreadful smile upon his face he overcame her spasmodic struggles for freedom. He kissed her, and by his kiss he quelled her resistance; for she felt the fires of hell, and fainted in his hold.

CHAPTER XIII.

ESCAPE.

WAS it a dream—a nightmare of her fevered brain? Was she back again in the tortures of her long illness, with Lucy and Nell whispering behind the screen, wondering how soon the end would come? Had she imagined that dreadful struggle against overwhelming odds? If so, why was she lying here, gazing at the fitful firelight on the oak rafters of the kitchen instead of on her bed upstairs?

But consciousness was returning. Her brain was groping for the truth, and the truth was coming to her gradually, inevitably, inexorably. She remembered her flight down the stairs, her headlong fall in the passage. She remembered the coming of Arthur, the brief interview in the kitchen, his terrible unspoken accusation. She remembered his kiss——

Then she awoke to the fact that she was lying on the stones before the fire with a man's coat spread under her. Trembling, she raised herself and found she was alone.

At last with difficulty she made her way to the door that led into the passage, turned the handle, and found it locked. She crept round the room to the door into the yard. This also was locked and the key gone. The window was barred. She was a prisoner.

She went to the window and stood before it. It looked on to thick laurel bushes that successfully screened the farmyard from view. Standing thus, there came to her a sudden sound across the stillness of the night, a sound that seemed to galvanize her to a more vivid consciousness of tragedy —the report of a gun. It was followed immediately by another, and then the silence fell again—a silence that could be felt. Tensely, with every nerve stretched, she listened, but though her ears sang with the effort she heard no more. The moonlight and the silence possessed the world.

A feeling of physical sickness came upon her so overwhelmingly that she had to sit down to combat it.

Slowly the minutes crawled away, and again through her fainting soul there beat the old, throbbing prayer: "From all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, Good Lord deliver us."

Her lips were still repeating the words mechanically when through the dreadful stillness there came at length a sound—the soft trying of the handle and then the turning of the key.

Frances raised her head. In that night of dreadful happenings she had not expected deliverance. A small white figure stood on the threshold, barefooted, with face upraised, listening.

"Are you here?" whispered a childish voice.

"My dear!" Frances said.

The little figure came forward. The moonlight fell upon the upturned, flower-like face. "Please will you take me to sleep with you to-night?" she said.

Strength came back to Frances. The instinct to protect awoke within her, reviving her. She got up and went to the child.

"What made you come to me here, Rosebud?" she said.

"I thought you called me," Ruth answered. "But perhaps it was a dream. I thought you were frightened, as you were that night at the Stones. You are very cold. Are you frightened?"

But Frances could not answer her. She was conscious of a weight of tears at her heart to which she dared not give vent.

"Shall we go upstairs?" said Ruth, with soft fingers entwined in hers. "And perhaps you will be able to sleep."

She yielded to the child's guidance as she had yielded before without hesitation or misgiving. They went out into the passage. But here a sudden sound made her pause—it was the opening of the door that led into the garden.

Ruth pulled at her hand. "It is only grandpa. He is always late to bed."

But Frances drew back sharply. "You run up, darling!" she whispered. "I can't come yet."

What impulse it was that urged her she could not have said, but it was too strong to be resisted. She saw Ruth start obediently but somewhat forlornly up the stairs, and she drew herself back into a deep recess under the staircase and crouched there, not breathing.

Ruth was right. It was the old man who had entered. He paused at the kitchen-door as though he were listening, and she shrank more closely into her hiding-place, dreading discovery. But in a moment he pushed open the door and entered, closing it behind him.

Then the impulse to escape came to her, or perhaps it had been there, dormant against her breathless heart, the whole time. She saw the place as a monstrous prison, stone-walled and terrible, herself a captive guarded on all sides, helpless, beaten by circumstances, broken by Fate. And then this chance—this solitary chance of freedom.

Swiftly upon the closing of that door she left her retreat, stole along the passage to the door, lifted the latch, and was out upon the brick path in the moonlight.

She saw no one, and so slipped out on to the lawn by the bed of mignonette in front of the dairy window. The scent of it rose up in the night like incense. As a thief she crept along in the shadow of the house to the gate that led into the farmyard.

She reached the farther gate and found it stood open to the lane. More steadily she passed through and began to walk down the hill between the steep banks.

Then—and it seemed to her later that this was the very thing she had been expecting—the one thing for which she had come—there sounded on the hill behind her the whir of an engine, the slipping of wheels in the mud. Quite calmly she turned and faced the lights of a small car coming rapidly down upon her. She did not know how it happened, or how near she was to death—at that moment it would not have interested her to know—but she heard a shout and the sharp grinding of a brake applied to the utmost, followed by the ominous sound of locked wheels that grated to a standstill within a yard of her.

"Who is it?" cried a man's voice. "What the devil do you want? I'm in a hurry."

The voice was agitated; it had a desperate sound. This also she noticed, but her own was clear and calm.

"Will you take me with you?" she said "I am going your way."

"Frances!" he said, in amazement.

"Will you take me?" she repeated.

"Of course I will take you! Get in! Get in!"

She moved along the side of the car. His hand came out to her, the door swung open.

The next moment they were rushing down the lane into a gulf of blackness, and she knew that the prison walls would menace her no more.

PART III.

CHAPTER I.

THE VICTIM.

OF that wild rush through the night Frances never recalled any very clear detail afterwards.

Her companion never spoke to her, his whole attention apparently being occupied in forcing the utmost speed from his car, despite the extreme unevenness of the moorland road they travelled. In the end they ran into a little town and straight up the one broad street to an inn called the Man in the Moon.

"Is this where you are staying?" she said.

"Yes," said Rotherby. "It's comfortable enough in a homely way. Will you get out?"

She turned in the seat and faced him. By the light of the moon he looked ghastly pale, but he managed to call up a smile.

"If there is another inn in the place I'll go to it," said Frances.

"I'm afraid there isn't," said Rotherby. "And you probably wouldn't get in if there were. But you needn't be anxious on that account. I'll call you my sister if you like."

She got out of the car without further discussion and waited while he ran it under an archway into the stable-yard. It seemed a long while before he joined her again, and then she noticed that he moved with a curiously halting gait, almost as if he were feeling his way.

Suddenly he uttered an inarticulate exclamation and grabbed at her arm. She

was aware of his whole weight flung abruptly upon her, and she caught at him, supporting him as best she could.

Several dreadful seconds passed, then he made a determined effort and straightened himself. As he did so, she felt the sleeve of his coat at the elbow, and found it wet through.

"What has happened?" she said, through trembling lips. "Your arm! Is it—is it——"

"Blood? Yes. I got it in the shoulder. Don't be frightened! I shall get over it.

"There's the room you told me to prepare, sir," said the man, with a loutish grin.

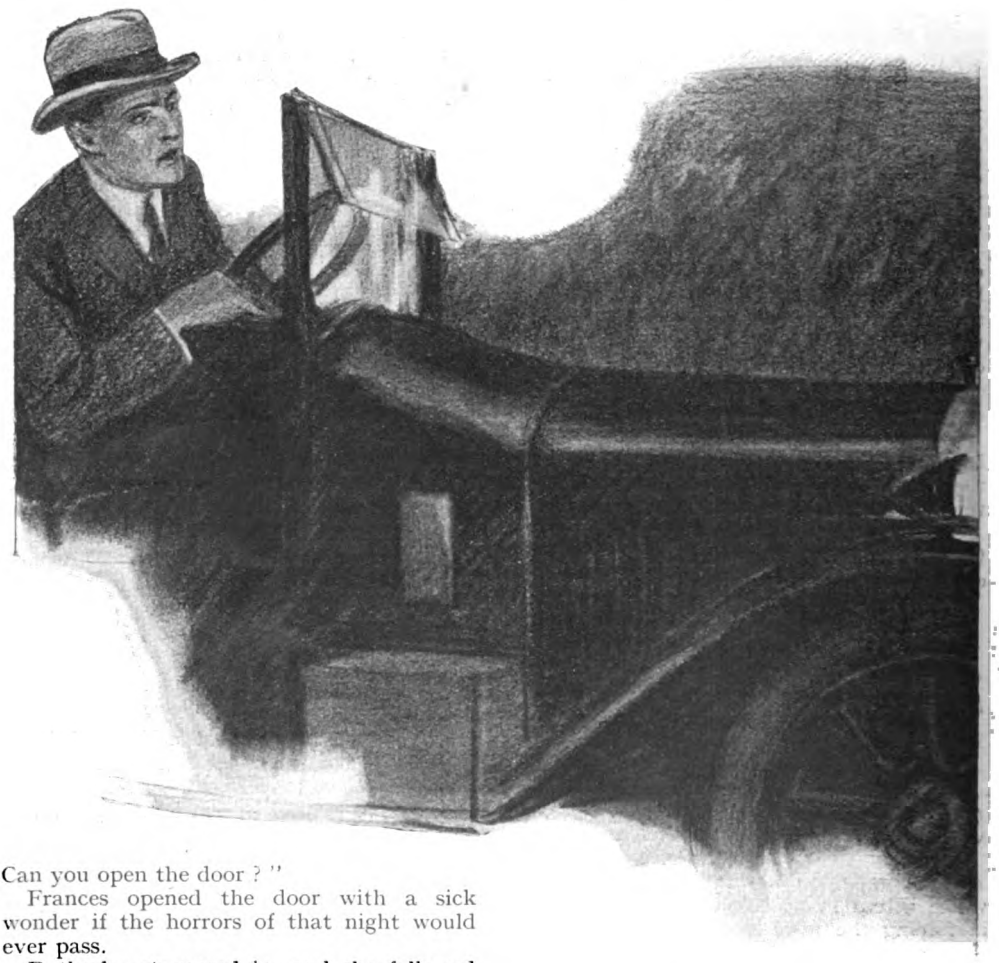
"That'll do. Take her to it! See that she has everything she wants! Good night, Frances! You follow him! I shall see you in the morning."

Rotherby spoke calmly, but it was through clenched teeth.

Frances waited a moment, then spoke.

"I can't—possibly—leave you like this. You have been hurt. You must let me do what I can to help you."

He yielded the point abruptly. "Very



Can you open the door?"

Frances opened the door with a sick wonder if the horrors of that night would ever pass.

Rotherby staggered in, and she followed him closely, half expecting him to fall headlong. But he had mastered himself to a certain extent, and she heard him speak with some authority to the shock-headed landlord who came to meet them.

"This lady is my sister. Can you give her a comfortable room for the night?"

well—if you wish it. Get some hot water, Jarvis! I've had a bit of an accident."

He moved forward to the stairs, and Frances went with him, feeling herself once more the victim of an inexorable Fate.

Then went up together, Rotherby stumbling until she gave him her arm to steady

him. Reaching a small landing on which a gas-jet burned low, he directed her into a room with an open door, and they entered, he leaning upon her.

The moonlight flooded in through the uncovered window, and she saw that it was a bedroom with an old four-poster bed. She helped Rotherby to it, and he sank down upon the foot with a sigh of relief.

She lighted the gas, that flared starkly in the shabby, old-fashioned room, and turned round to him again, forcing herself to a calm and matter-of-fact attitude.

With the utmost care she helped him remove his coat, and was shocked to find that the shirt-sleeve was soaked with blood from shoulder to elbow.

Then Frances bent to her work. She found a jagged wound in the shoulder, from which the blood was still oozing, and she proceeded to bathe it with a strip of linen torn from the shirt-sleeve. The means at her disposal were wholly elementary, but she performed her task with a deftness that was characteristic of her, finding with infinite relief that the wound was not vitally deep.

"Will you take me with you?" she said. "I am going your way."

Rotherby endured her ministrations with a stoicism that stirred her to admiration.

And then, when she had finished at last, he told her where to find some handkerchiefs for bandaging purposes.

"You will go to a doctor in the morning, won't you?" she said, pausing. "I have only cleansed it. There is bound to be some shot in the wound."

"Some what?" said Rotherby, and looked at her with one of his most quizzical glances though his face was still drawn with pain. "Oh, didn't I tell you that I tore it on some barbed wire?"

She felt herself colour deeply, but she did not take up the challenge. "I should go to a doctor all the same," she said quietly.

He laughed at her with a touch of impudence that she could not resent. "Very good, Sister Superior, I will. Now, if you don't mind tying me up, I shall be grateful. Where would you like me to sleep—in this room, or my own?"

"In your own," she said, firmly.

He sobered suddenly at her tone. "Look here, you won't run away in the night, will you? I promise you—I swear to you—I'll play the game."

"I have nowhere to run to," she said, and turned away from him that he might not see the bitterness on her face.

When she returned with the handkerchiefs she was her practical self once more. But she was beginning to be conscious of intense physical weariness, and she felt a sense of gratitude to him for noticing it.

"I say, you are tired! You've been ill, haven't you?"

"I am well again," she said.

He swept the assurance aside. "You don't look it. Don't bother about me any more! Oh, well, just tie a wet pad over it and then leave me to my fate!"

But when it was over at last, when she was alone in the strange room and realized how completely that night's happenings had changed the whole course of her life, a blackness of despair came down upon her more overwhelming than any she had ever known. She cast herself down just as she was and wept out her agony till sheer exhaustion came upon her and she drifted at last into the merciful oblivion of dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER II.

THE BARGAIN.

IT was late in the morning when she awoke. Her long sleep had refreshed her and she reflected with relief that her strength was certainly returning. The thought of meeting Montague Rotherby gave her no dismay.

Somehow, as she entered the room where he awaited her, she had a feeling that he had never really mattered very greatly in her life.

She came forward to him, faintly smiling. "Are you better to-day?" she said.

She did not offer her hand, but he took it. His face twitched a little at her matter-of-fact greeting. She saw at a glance that he looked ill.

"I've had a foul night," he said, "but it's not serious. I'm going up to town. Will you come with me?"

She looked at him, startled. "Oh, no!" she said.

He stared at her for a few seconds, at first frowningly, then with a growing cynicism. At length: "What have they done to you at Tetherstones?" he said. "Since you accepted my protection last night—more, asked for it—I should have thought there was quite a good reason why you should be willing to come to town with me to-day."

"Then you are quite wrong," she replied, very clearly. "I am not prepared to do anything of the kind."

He frowned again upon her; then, "Let's have some breakfast!" he said abruptly, and turned away.

She noticed that he ate very little, but he seemed fully master of himself, and she put away the feeling of uneasiness that tried to take possession of her. She would very thankfully have avoided any discussion of the events of the previous night, but she knew this to be inevitable. There were certain things that must be faced.

He pushed back his chair at length and spoke. "There's only one way out of this tangle," he said. "You must realize that as I do. But perhaps I have not made myself very clear. What I want you to do is to come up to town and—marry me. Will you do that?" He smiled at her with the words.

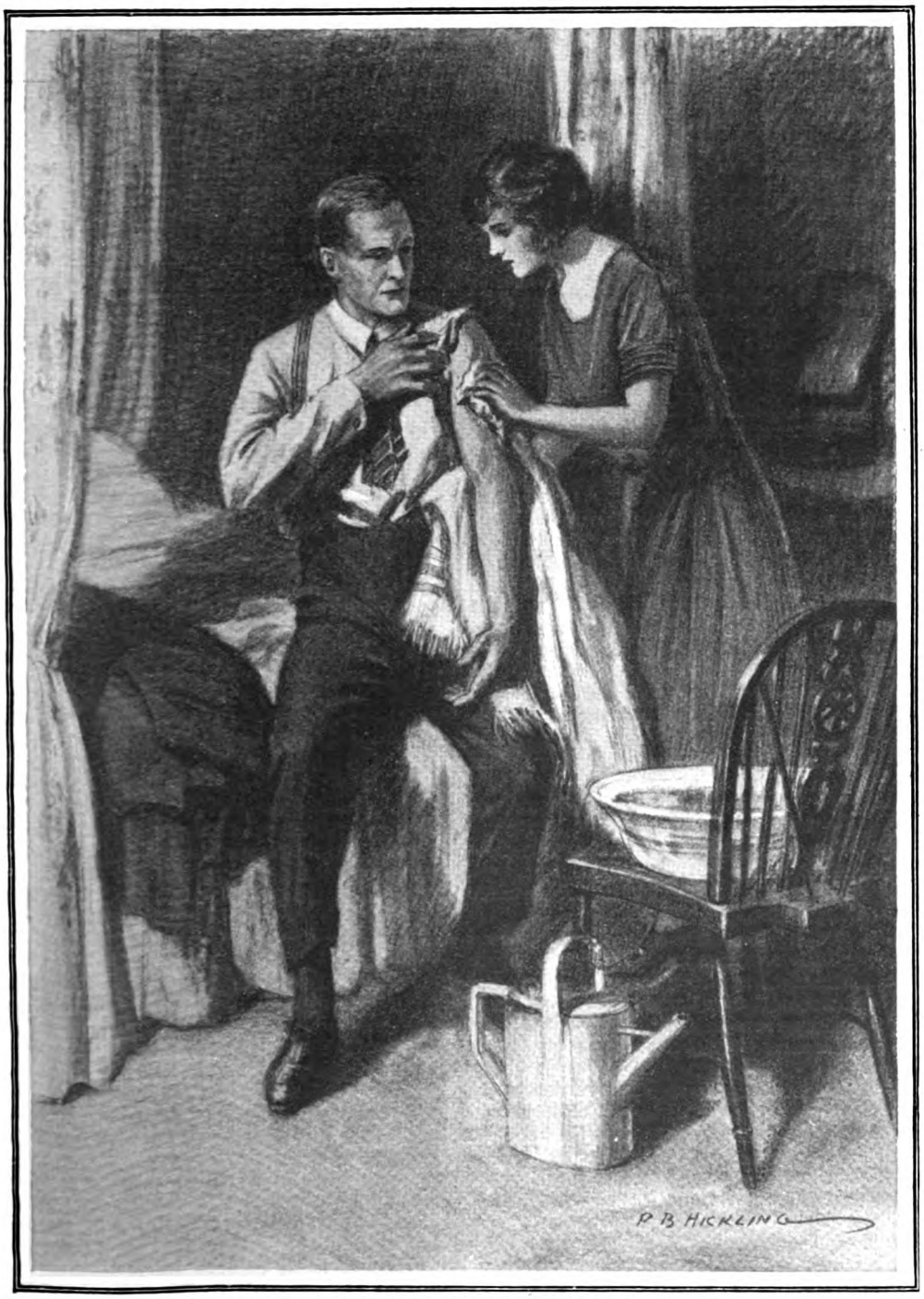
Frances was on her feet. He had roused her to feeling at last, but it was not such feeling as would have moved her a few weeks earlier. She had to stifle an almost overwhelming sense of indignation before she could speak.

"It is quite impossible," she said then, with the utmost emphasis. "It is quite, quite impossible!"

"What are you going to do?" said Rotherby.

"I will work," she said. "I am not afraid of work. And I don't care what I do."

He looked at her speculatively. "Yes, it sounds all right," he said. "But you haven't the strength, and you know it"



She found a jagged wound in the shoulder, from which the blood was still oozing, and she proceeded to bathe it with a strip of linen torn from the shirt-sleeve.

"What is the use of saying that?" she said, protesting almost in spite of herself.

"Because I want you to see reason," he rejoined, and she knew that he recognized his advantage and would press it to the utmost. "Why don't you want to marry me, Circe? You might do very much worse."

She drew back from him. "Oh, don't you see that it is out of the question?" she said. "I couldn't marry you. I don't love you."

"How did you come to find out?" said Rotherby.

The inquisition was becoming intolerable, but she faced him with resolution. "I have had a good many hours for thought," she said, "and I have thought a good deal."

"At Tetherstones?" he said.

"Yes."

She saw a gleam of something she did not understand in his look. He seemed to be watching narrowly for something. He spoke abruptly.

"What I don't understand—what I want to understand—is why you came with me last night."

She hesitated. She could not tell him of that awful interview in the farm kitchen.

"I was coming to meet you," she said. "I knew you were in some sort of danger. I didn't know what. I was coming to warn you."

Reluctantly she uttered the brief sentences. It was like the betrayal of her friends.

He seized upon the unwilling admission.

"You knew? How did you know?"

She had to answer him. "One of the men on the farm told me. He didn't say why—merely that you were in danger—that I had better warn you to go."

"And then you decided to come with me?" said Rotherby.

"I decided that I couldn't stay any longer," she told him steadily. "You came up at the right moment, that was all."

"You're not going back?" he questioned.

Something rose in her throat. She forced her utterance. "Never, no, never!" she said.

He made no comment, but turned away from her and paced the length of the room before he spoke again. Then, with his back to her, he paused.

"And yet you would sooner work yourself to death than marry me!"

She answered him immediately with feverish insistence. "Yes, I must work. I must work. I can't go on being dependent. I can't endure it."

He turned round. "Perhaps—if you were independent—you might regard me differently," he said.

She was silent.

He came slowly back to her. "Circe! May I hope for that?"

She looked at him helplessly.

He stood before her. "I swear to you," he said forcibly, "that no one on this earth wants you as I do."

A curious tremor of feeling went through her. She was stirred in spite of herself.

He put out his hand to her. "Circe!" His voice came oddly uncontrolled. "Won't you—can't you——"

She did not know what moved her—his obvious earnestness or her own utter friendlessness. But somehow her mood answered his. Her hand went into his grasp.

"But I must be independent first," she said. It was the last effort of her pride. "You'll help me to be that?"

"I'll help you," he said.

CHAPTER III.

THE TURN OF THE TIDE.

THE days that succeeded her flight from Tetherstones left an ineradicable impression upon Frances. She maintained her steady refusal to accompany Rotherby to London, but she did not remain at the Man in the Moon. She found a bedroom over the little post-office at Fordestown, and here she established herself, after collecting her few belongings from her former lodging at Brookside. She had very little money left, but she built on the hope that her sketches might find a market. Rotherby had undertaken to do his best to dispose of the one which he had taken with him, and she had plans for making more while the golden weather lasted.

On the second day of her sojourn at Fordestown she wrote to Dolly at Tetherstones. She found it impossible to give any adequate reason for her abrupt departure, so she barely touched upon it beyond begging her to believe that in spite of everything she was and would ever be deeply grateful for all the kindness that they had shown her. She ended the letter with a request that the next time Oliver had to come to Fordestown he might bring her sketching materials to her. She posted her letter and went out on to the moor for the rest of the day.

Those days of waiting were as the days spent by a prisoner awaiting trial, only there was no hope on the horizon. No one knew what she was enduring. There was no one at hand to help her.

And then one day there came a letter from Rotherby, and in that letter was an enclosure that sent the blood tingling through her veins. He had sold her sketch for five guineas, and he could dispose of

more if she cared to send them. "Couldn't you do a companion picture to the stepping-stones?" he said in conclusion.

His letter held no endearments. It was the most business-like epistle she had ever received from him, and her gratitude was intense. She sent him all the sketches she had by the next post, and with them a note expressing her earnest thanks and asking how he fared.

Then she sat down to think. It seemed to her in the first flush of excitement that this was the most wonderful thing that had ever happened to her. It was like a tonic to her drooping spirits. Surely it was the turning-point at last!

Rotherby's letter was close to her hand, and she proceeded to read it afresh.

IT was while she was thus employed that she heard the trampling of a horse's hoofs outside, and looked forth once more in time to see Dr. Square just rolling off his old white horse.

Her heart gave a leap at the sight, and presently she heard the sound of his heavy step upon the stairs. She went to her door then and opened it, meeting him on the narrow landing outside.

She saw in a moment that his big face lacked its usual cheeriness, though he greeted her with outstretched hand. "Ah, here you are, Miss Thorold! Dolly told me where to look for you, and they sent me up from downstairs. May I come in?"

"Please do!" she said, and led the way back into her room. Her first instinctive feeling of pleasure at sight of him had given way to one of misgiving. She turned very quickly and faced him. "Please tell me what is the matter! Something is wrong."

His kindly eyes looked into hers with a hint of concern. "Don't you upset yourself, Miss Thorold!" he said. "You're not too strong, remember. It's the little girl—little Ruth. She's had an accident, and she's very ill."

"Oh, poor mite!" said Frances. "How did it happen?"

"It's difficult to say. The child was lost for some hours the day after you left. Then they found her up at the Stones. She had been looking for you, she said. And that was all they could get out of her. She had had a bad fall off the Rocking Stone, and couldn't move."

"Oh, poor little girl!" Frances' voice was quick with anxiety. "Is she much hurt?"

Dr. Square nodded slowly once or twice. "She has no strength, and I'm afraid—very much afraid—there is some mischief to the spine. She keeps on asking for you, Miss Thorold. I said I'd come and tell you."

"Ah!" Frances said.

It came upon her like a blow—the cudgel-stroke of Fate. So there was to be no escape after all! A sense of suffocation came upon her, and she turned sharply to the window, instinctively seeking air. Blind for a moment, she leaned there, gathering her strength.

She lifted her face to the soft grey sky with an inarticulate prayer for help.

She heard again the doctor's voice behind her, and realized that he was pleading for something very near his heart. Was not little Ruth near to the hearts of all who knew her?

"It won't be for very long," he was saying. "She's fretting her heart out for you because she has got hold of the idea that you are in danger—frightened—unhappy. No one can set her mind at rest except you, and it would be a kindness to them all at Tetherstones to go and do it. You would like to do them a kindness, Miss Thorold?"

That moved her. Very suddenly all her doubt and hesitation were swept away. To do them a kindness—these people who had brought her back from the gates of death, who had sheltered her, cared for her, comforted her in her extremity! What mattered anything besides?

With a sharp, catching breath she turned. "I will go—of course," she said. "How can I get there?"

He smiled at her with instant relief, and she realized that he had hardly expected to gain his point.

"Well, as I said, you'll never regret it," he said. "As to getting there, Oliver's in the town now with the cart. Do you mind going back with him? It may be for a few days, you know. You're prepared for that?"

"I will stay as long as little Ruth wants me," she said.

"That's right. That's like you." He held out his hand to her. "Good-bye, Miss Thorold! You're looking better. I believe the tide of your luck has turned."

CHAPTER IV.

RUTH.

"PLEASED to see you, Miss Thorold." Oliver touched his hat with his whip and gave her his friendly smile of welcome. "A bad business this about the little girl. They're all very upset at Tetherstones."

"I am sure they must be," Frances said.

"What a terribly sad business, Oliver! Who was it found her?"

"I found her," said Oliver. "But we thought she was with you, and no one missed her at first. She'd been lying there all night and a good part of the day before she was missed. She was lying just under the Rocking Stone unconscious, and I carried her back. She's come to herself since, but they say she's somehow different—that she'll never be the same again—that she——" He broke off to cough and flicked the horse's ears with his whip. They clattered over the rough stones of the street for some distance in silence. After a while he spoke again. "She's only a child—a bit of a baby—but she isn't like others I've ever seen. Maggie is just breaking her heart over her."

"Poor Maggie!" said Frances gently.

"Yes." He nodded acquiescence. "Maggie and Nan — Ruth's mother — were always the pals, you see. There was only a year between them. Nan was Arthur's favourite sister, too. He's feeling it pretty badly—though he'd sooner die than let anyone know."

Frances felt her heart contract. She said nothing.

They were out upon the open moor road before Oliver volunteered anything further. Then, somewhat abruptly, with a sidelong glance at her, he said, "It's decent of you to come back to us after the fright you had."

"I am only coming for little Ruth's sake," Frances said.

"Yes, I know. The doctor told me. I didn't think he'd get you to come," said Oliver frankly. "You'd had a pretty bad scare. But it might have been worse, I suppose. The fellow wasn't much damaged, was he?"

There was curiosity in his tone tempered with a reticence that she was quick to detect. A sharp sense of anger surged within her.

"It was no thanks to—to—the man who shot him that he wasn't killed," she said.

"No. I know," said Oliver. He added after a moment, "Anyway, I did my best to prevent it. It wasn't my fault that it happened."

She turned upon him. "But he might have been killed," she said.

He nodded. "So he might. But he wasn't. That's all that matters. Where is he now?"

"He has gone to town," she said.

"My little darling!" Frances

"Then, if he's a wise man, he'll stop there," said Oliver with finality, and whipped up his horse.

She asked no more questions of Oliver, for she knew instinctively that she would receive no actual enlightenment from him. Moreover, something within her shrank from discussing Arthur Dermot and Arthur Dermot's motives with a third person.

As they neared their destination the atmosphere of Tetherstones seemed to be reaching out to receive them—the old grey

place from which she had fled as from a prison.

They reached the white gate, standing wide to receive them, and drove through to the garden, where Roger met them with extravagant antics of delight. His welcome sent a warmth to her heart that in some fashion eased the unacknowledged pain there. She approached the old stone doorway with more assurance.

Oliver saluted and turned the horse ; she heard him driving round to the stables as she entered.

The door stood open according to custom. The passage was dark, but she heard someone moving in the kitchen and directed her steps thither, Roger bounding by her side. Then as she turned a corner there came the sudden tread of feet, and she drew back sharply. She was face to face with Arthur Dermot.

He did not attempt to address her, but she could not pass him so in his own house. She stood still.

But for a second or two her voice refused to serve her, and he made an odd movement as if to compel her to pass on. Then with a sharp effort she spoke.

" Little Ruth—I have come to see her. Is she—is she——"

" Dying—yes," he said. " It was—good of you to come. Nell and Lucy are in the kitchen. If you like, I will tell them you are here."

" No, no," she said. ' I will go to them."

She found the two girls in the kitchen, very subdued and troubled, though they gave her a ready welcome.

" We've missed you dreadfully," said Nell. " And little Ruth has hardly left off crying for you all these days." Her lip quivered. " Dr. Square said he should go and tell you after your letter came—but I didn't think you'd come."

said softly. " Have you been wanting me ? "

" I had to come," Frances said. " Please take me to her ! "

They traversed two or three rambling passages before they reached Mrs. Dermot's room. It was over the kitchen, a low, oak-raftered apartment with an uneven floor. It contained two beds, and in one of these, close to a narrow, ivy-grown window, lay Ruth.

Her face was turned towards the door, and—it came upon Frances with a curious sense of shock—the eyes that had always

till then been closed were open, wide open, and burning with a fire so spiritual, so unearthly, that for a moment she halted almost as one afraid. In that moment she realized very fully and beyond all possibility of doubt that little Ruth was dying.

She went to the child's bedside as if she were entering a sanctuary.

Ruth greeted her instantly, but she lay like a waxen image with tiny hands folded on her breast.

"Have you come back at last, dear Miss Thorold?" she said, a thrill of gladness in her voice. "God told me you would in a dream last night."

Frances knelt down by the bed and closely clasped the little folded hands, that never stirred to her touch. "My little darling!" she said softly. "Have you been wanting me?"

The burning eyes were fixed upon her. It was as though in them alone the living spirit lingered. She was sure that the spirit saw her in that hour.

"Yes, I have wanted you," the child said. "I have been calling you—crying for you—ever since that night. You said that you were coming then, but you never came."

"I couldn't," whispered Frances.

"Then God took care of you," Ruth said, with conviction. "There was something dreadful very near you—very near you; but He sent it away."

Those blind eyes—the eyes of a visionary—kindled afresh with the words, and a sudden sense as of something vividly remembered smote Frances. She had seen those eyes before. Where? Where? Then it came to her—like a rending flash of lightning across a dark sky. The Bishop of Burminster had had that inner flame as of prophecy in his eyes on the night that he had denounced her. A great wave of feeling went through her. She had an overwhelming desire to shield herself, shrinking as one shrinks from the unsparing beam of a searchlight.

"We won't talk of it now, darling," she said, almost pleadingly. "Try to go to sleep!"

"I don't want to sleep," said the child. "I want to give you a message, but it hasn't come yet. And if I go to sleep, I shall forget it."

"We will give her something to make her sleep presently," said Dolly gently. "She isn't in any pain—only a little tired. Take this chair, Miss Thorold! You must be tired too."

So Frances sat down beside the bed to wait, as all in that house were waiting, for the coming of the Angel of Death.

(To be continued.)

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 120.

BESIDE the sea—in Yorkshire, or in Kent—
By many now a happy time is spent.

1. This all at once, in restoration days,
   Told tale of rival king in specious phrase.
2. A famous part, with part of part oft played,
   Here gains a head, and thus a head is made.
3. Louisa first, then Lydia he wed:
   His second name we ask, bereft of head.
4. A land of Hope and Glory, and Romance,
   Pride, Pomp, and most exciting Circumstance
5. This man was foreman in a famous case;
   A tale that has no hero names the place.
6. The three names of one man alike we treat,
   Then bird and this enclose a London street.
7. Dry leaves, almost unknown, a wondrous breath
   Of younger inspiration saved from death.
8. The A B C reveals it, in its prime,
   Three four, presumably, the proper time.
9. Half name of one from whom a continent
   Received its name, by some strange accident.
10. Dull realm! Two or three voices, persons three,
    And relatives that often disagree.
11. The first was fifth, of second name now think,
    A rhyme for third will turn our minds to drink.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 120 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on July 11th.

Two answers may be sent to every light.

It is essential that solvers, with their answers to this acrostic, should send also their real names and addresses.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 119.

(The Third of the Series.)

DEAR friend of childhood, far from white in hue,
Boy, dame, and master, all should welcome you.

1. The Mountains of the Moon are known to fame;
   A mount on Mars the gorgeous East can claim.
2. A tree it is. And if you change its head,
   One of the months is visible instead.
3. Milk flows like water—it is water here,
   Where Beauty dwells, her sole companion Beer.
4. An island study, hard indeed is it,
   With thoughts of thieving in the opposite.
5. Subsistence, stronghold, celebrate, remain,
   Continue, manage, practise, guard, maintain.

PAX.

1. B	c n a r o	S
2. L	a r c	H
3. A	n n a n d a l	E
4. C	o n c r e t	E
5. K	c e	P

NOTES.—Proem. The nursery rhyme. Light 1. Ben, mountain; Ares, Mars. 2. March. 3. The river Milk, in Annandale; Ann and ale. 4. Two words; one word; abstract.

"Instant" has good claims to be admitted as correct for the second light of No. 116. It so happens, however, that Corisande, Mancu, and Zuz all sent this word instead of "Whitgift," and it follows that its acceptance or rejection cannot alter the destination of the prizes for the last series.

AS I KNOW THEM

Some Women Writers of To-day

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH CLEMENCE DANE
MAY SINCLAIR VIOLET HUNT
FRYN TENNYSON JESSE REBECCA WEST

By MRS C. A. DAWSON-SCOTT

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH.

THE wall of my cottage is flush with the lane and is continued by a stone hedge, the top of which is cushioned by a thick growth of short grass. My first recollection of Sheila Kaye-Smith is as a slight figure sitting on the top sideways and talking with funny quick gesticulations. She holds her hands, which are thin and tiny, close to her and high, so that she looks like a squirrel busy with a nut. Only she isn't a squirrel—she vibrates with a more intense life than even squirrels have.

I have a theory that animals select the colours in which they are always so appropriately clothed. If it were not a matter of choice, why should the three lizards who live in the stones at the gate-post end of my wall be garbed, the largest in green, the two others one in brown and one in a smart speckle of black and white? The same with Sheila. She happens to like the sort of colouring that squirrels affect, sometimes a grey as invisible as the space between tree twigs on a wintry day, sometimes an autumn russet of leaf and warm earth. Yes, she is some sort of woodland creature, but I think it is an elf or a brownie. An elusive thing, but, no, not mischievous. She had come to Cornwall from her native Sussex to see if it held for her any attraction, and two or three fields from my cottage was sharing "digs" with G. B. Stern. We were all hard-working people, and during the mornings we wrote, and during the afternoons we took Sheila around by cliff and sea and deep inland valley to see how they appealed to her.

She was happy to be in the warm soft air, but we could not persuade her to come out of her dreams. Cornwall was not right for her. Later she went to the Channel Islands and there felt perfectly at home. It is true that some of her forefathers had come from them, and that may have influenced their descendant, for usually she prefers the crazy pattern of hedged agricultural land to the sweep of even the most magnificent seas.

I did not read "Sussex Gorse" until after I met her, for I must admit that I was prejudiced by the name. I knew Sussex as a seaside county, knew its many houses, the visitors who were neither the jolly Margate folk nor the infrequent artist-antiquary of the West, its commonplace

parades and piers and bands. I knew, too, its dull sea-rim, grey and unlovely. But once I had read " Sussex Gorse " I thought very differently of that county. Behind the edge of Channel were the real inhabitants, and to the modern mind reality alone is interesting. Miss Kaye-Smith was not writing of the folks in the hotels and boarding-houses, was not busying herself with surface trifles, the social humours, the petty comedies and tragedies. What had caught her deep attention were the minds and actions of workers. Her characters were makers, and she wrote of them with both strength and understanding.

Indeed, the strength of her books—of " Tamarisk Town," " Green Apple Harvest," " Joanna Godden "—is in marked contrast with her frail appearance. It appears that, being a delicate child, she had been sent to live for some time on a farm in the neighbourhood of St. Leonards. This life—productive, simple, crude—made an indelible impression. Here were men and women in natural surroundings, people who, with the ordinary person's weaknesses, were yet valuable members of the community. The literature that is concerned with peasants—with those who prove, by hard work and frugality, their right to live, whose days are a struggle with adverse circumstance and the forces of Nature—is less ephemeral than any other. A publisher once told me that the length of life of the ordinary novel is six months. Stories of cottage life, of peasant, farmer, fisherman, do not so quickly pass. That stay in the country when Miss Kaye-Smith's gifts were in their sturdy infancy was for her a miracle of good fortune.

Her everyday life is spent on the very seaboard about which she does not write. Her parents had both been married before they met and each had a child, therefore she has both step- and half-sisters.

She lives in one of the houses that are characteristic of the suburbs of any town, that sort of convenient dwelling that has shaven lawns and tiled garden paths and a chintz interior. Unfortunately, the sort that nowadays suffers a good deal from servant difficulties! Our civilization is in a transition stage, and until we accept a simple sort of life, with the labour-saving devices used in America, our middle-class women will have a hard and cramping time.

Meanwhile it would be amazing that Sheila Kaye-Smith should live in a house of that sort, if it were not that her so doing revealed another aspect of her complex nature. The depths of her react to the stimuli of reality, the surface accepts and is happy in less austere surroundings.

Sheila Kaye-Smith came into her own with " Sussex Gorse," and some maintain that " Joanna Godden " is a yet finer book; but neither seems to me as good as " Little England." Those who have lived through the Great War must express, each in her individual way, how it moved them. Sometimes (when it is a writer) the result is simply a war-book; but the greater the artist the less likely her work to take a stereotyped form. Sheila's " Little England " is her impression of the war. It is remarkable among those large strong books for a simple tenderness. On my shelves it stands between Rebecca West's " Return of the Soldier " and Mary Webb's " Golden Arrow."

Strength is a quality inherent in metals and wood as well as animals. Tenderness is human. If I am right in seeing tenderness as of more importance in a work of art than strength, then " Little England " is Sheila Kaye-Smith's greatest book.

IT is interesting to contrast " Sussex Gorse " with Miss Tennyson Jesse's " Secret Bread." Both are the story of a man's life, a long life of many years. They are intimately connected with the soil. In each the man marries twice, but is preoccupied with other matters than love.

So far they are alike, but in all other ways widely different. The grey, hard life of Sussex shows flinty against the warmth and colour of Cornish farming. Reuben Backfield is dour, a harsh, hard fellow, gnarled as the furze on the bit of land he covets, but he stands out as a man; Miss Tennyson Jesse's hero is less interesting. His years are spent in search, not of obvious but spiritual bread, that which shall nourish his soul, and he is not sufficiently of the earth, earthy, to hold the attention. The interest of this book lies not in the personal effort of the man, but in his following fate. Ibsen held that the only way to use such a motive successfully would be to make the children suffer for the sins of the father as in " Ghosts." Miss Jesse made a following fate the motive of " Secret Bread," but her book ends on a note not of tragedy but inexorable justice and consequent peace. Miss Kaye-Smith's book also ends as life ends when it has been long and has had ups and downs—that is to say, in calm. Tragedy is for the young; for the old is either the satisfaction of achievement or the sense of its futility. It is interesting that these writers, both young, should have realized this, but the thing written is often greater and wiser than those who held the pen.

The people who arrange tours in Switzerland were sufficiently perspicacious to perceive that if a well-known novelist who was

also a good speaker could be induced to come to some charming resort and give a lecture, it would prove a draw. How they discovered that Miss Kaye-Smith would be a good pioneer I cannot guess; but they were right. She is a surprisingly fine speaker, is never flurried, marshals her facts in excellent order, and thinks clearly. She enjoys the unexpected, likes the decorous venture, and when, in response to their cry for help, she travelled to Mürren, it was to find that she was going to enjoy herself. Indeed, so pleasant was the experience that she has been again.

She speaks occasionally in London, and was for a year President of the To-morrow Club and on the committee of the P.E.N. Club, but is not a woman who enjoys sitting in the public eye. Novelists are as a rule elusive people. Miss Kaye-Smith is perhaps —of all of them—the most evasive, the most difficult to know. "*Souvent femme varie*," says the Frenchman; "infinite variety," says the Englishman, and Sheila of the ever-changing face is only constant in being different. One day she will have the unruffled youth of seventeen years, at another the clouded outlook of age. You may see

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH.

Photo. E. O. Hoppé.

her change during a meal. About her eyes the puckers will come, or equally they may go—in accordance, perhaps, with her thoughts and dreams rather than her moods. She is, indeed, of everyone I know, the most fascinating to watch.

MAY SINCLAIR.

AMONG the reviews of my first novel—"The Story of Anna Beames"—was one in an Irish paper, the *Northern Whig*. My first glimpse of the columns suggested that the critic had been very generous with his space, but on reading the review I found that my book had been considered with another by an author at that time unknown to me. The heroines of the stories were named Ann and Anna, and the other book was "The Helpmate," by May Sinclair. The natural result was that I got the book, and on reading it felt an instant desire to make the writer's acquaintance.

Not long afterwards, at a party, I noticed a lady sitting dreamily apart. If ever I see anyone sitting alone, I am tempted to go over and talk to them. Behind that unknown surface may lie the possibility of human adventure. I remember, however, an occasion when the stranger on whom I had intruded proved to be deaf. In this instance I asked my hostess to introduce me—a ceremony I often dispense with—and I was in luck, for the quiet lady proved to be Miss Sinclair.

The effect of her curious impassivity was Eastern—I think Japanese—an effect heightened by the use of Oriental embroideries and by a certain all-of-a-piece way of moving and dressing. Then—the bright dark eyes that gave character to the broad face, the long fine black hair! She made me think then, she does still, of Japanese plays, and Samurai, and fine work with the needle and with woods and metals and lacquer.

During the years before the war I saw Miss Sinclair here and there, but did not get to know her well. I had the feeling that she was remote, a person dreaming a long dream. Out of it came a slow procession of books, but the creator of them stayed behind, like a winged insect in its silken sheath. It had wings, but they were folded.

"The Divine Fire" was the novel which awoke the world to a realization of Miss Sinclair's gift as a story-teller. It was time, too. For years she had been working with that lack of appreciation which is so embittering. It was in America that the tide began to flow. It began and it has ever since been flowing more and more strongly. She told me a curious thing about that flowing. One day a brother who was abroad sent her a fan of peacock feathers, and by the same post ill-luck entered the house, for she heard that a good deal of money, family money, had been lost. She hung the fan upon the wall, valuing it for the sake of the giver; and the ill-luck continued. It grew worse, and prospects which had been merely grey turned black. At last, after a period uniform in misfortunes of every sort, Miss Sinclair glanced at her fan. "They say peacock feathers bring ill-luck," she said, and taking down the fan she thrust it, deliberately, into the fire.

That very day—yes, that is the strange part of it—that very day an unprecedentedly large order was received for her new book. The orders began to arrive with every mail; by the time a letter could reach her from America it was evident that the book was going to be a success.

Curious, eh? But it is a world in which curious inexplicable things happen. In this instance the beginning of the bad luck was when the fan came into the house; the end of the bad luck the day the feathers were burnt. All we can say about it is: "Odd, that!"

When war broke out I was in Cornwall; and I wrote suggesting that Miss Sinclair should come to me for a change. "Impossible!" she replied, and her letter sounded a joyous note. "I am off to Belgium to help on an ambulance." She was delighted that she was to share in the stress and danger. In a day or two I heard that she was gone. It was for her a tremendous experience, probably the one in her life which has made the deepest impression. Hers is one of those individualities which delight in and are stimulated by danger. If she goes yachting, she will not enjoy a fine-weather cruise, whereas rough seas and the suspicion that the boat is not altogether seaworthy will make her glad she has come. On one occasion, when bicycling down a hill, she discovered that the brake was not acting. At the bottom a wain had been drawn up across the road and she saw that there was no way of getting past. She must inevitably run into it. Her feeling was one of sudden intense exhilaration. Fortunately for her, her brain continued to function, and as she tore down the sharp gradient she was able to throw herself off sideways into the hedge, escaping from what might have been a disastrous accident with only a few scratches.

MAY SINCLAIR.

Photo. E. O. Hoppé.

Some time later she did come to me in Cornwall, but only on condition that I would tell her a ghost story every evening after supper—for she is interested in ghost stories, especially well-authenticated ones, and I collect them.

It is fortunate that everybody does not feel about Cornwall as I do, or we should be overdone with novels about the West and its ways. May Sinclair was born in Cheshire, and therefore the North attracted her. For a long time she had a country home among the Yorkshire hills. In the peace and quiet of it she wrote several of her best-known stories, but as time passed it occurred to her that the journey thither was long and that she might find a landscape that appealed to her a little nearer to London and her wide circle of friends. She had her tree-embosomed white-walled cottage with green doors in St. John's Wood, a cottage that was charming inside and out ; but she needed something that should be, characteristically, a little out of reach, just a little remote.

She found it at Stow on the Wold, a place amid the slopes of gentle hills, a serene English countryside which would form a suitable background for her stories. In the corner of a field, facing the view that appeals most strongly to her, she has built a—well, I hardly like to call it a shed. Perhaps super-shed is the proper word. At any rate, a wooden hut, with large windows, a room in which she can work without the everyday interruptions which

break so unmercifully the fine-spun threads of thought.

Another Sinclair—a Sinclair with a Northern voice—was asking her the other day whether she were Scottish, and though her crest is chanticleer, the usual Sinclair crest, and she believed she hailed from his side of the border, she was not sure. I think her love of metaphysics, her joy in Aristotelians, is proof positive that she does. "By their fruits shall ye know them," and this is as true of races as of trees. Miss Sinclair is not only a widely but a deeply read woman, and when she reads a Greek play or a German or French author it is in the original. Some of the beauty of her London sitting-room is given it by shelves of books, old and brown and with a touch of faded gold, books that have come to her from other members of her family. The sadness of circumstance is represented by them, too; for May Sinclair was one of a large family, the one girl among several brothers, who all, alas, died young.

The sadness of this was impressed on me one evening when I dined with her in company with Mr. W. L. George and his second wife. We sat, after dinner, about the brick hearth, in the dulled glow of the green-shaded lamp, and she showed us old photographs—herself as a girl, the houses in which she had lived, the brothers. Five of them, and all so handsome. They—it is so curious as to be almost unbelievable—they had all died of some sort of heart trouble or weakness. I remembered how often she has made her stories turn on the hero or heroine suffering from heart disease, and it seemed to me only natural that, with her experience, she should have done so.

In a sense—but what a sense!—their going has set her free: free from merely human duty, free to devote herself to the weaving of stories, the study of philosophy. She takes her pleasure in work, is pleased when a critic has understood what she meant to imply, when her books are translated into other tongues, when an appreciative letter comes to her through the post.

I see her sitting among the blues and purples of her room, a fire on the brick hearth that she has built, and outside the twilight slowly deepening. She has written lately of ghosts. She collects the names of people who have seen ghosts. She sits looking through, seeking the Reality which lies behind Appearances.

FRYN TENNYSON JESSE

WHEN I was a schoolgirl of fifteen I went to stay with my Cornish cousins at Camborne, and found not only the mild sweet air, with its ever-present suggestion of the sea, congenial, but also the people and the scenery. From thenceforth Cornwall was to me the land of glamour and romance; and when, in after years, stories of the West by a Miss Tennyson Jesse began to appear in the *English Review*, I marked them with the keenest possible interest.

In that "Rocky Land o' Strangers," not only is the dialect of each town different from that of the next, but the given names in one district are not to be found in another. Miss Jesse's stories had a greater warmth, deeper, brighter colour, a more transparent atmosphere than those by my cousin or myself, also the names of the characters were different, revealing to us that she was writing of the South, probably of some part between Quiller-Couch ground and Charles Marriott land.

The publication of "Secret Bread" confirmed my surmises, and, being one day in Mr. Heinemann's office, I asked him about the writer. Among the photographs on his wall was one of a bent, girlish head, and, pointing it out, he told me that Miss Jesse was as much intrigued by my Cornish novels as I by hers.

"She wants to meet you," he said, and forthwith arranged a little dinner at his house.

Mr. Heinemann's dinners were always—occasions; and that not only because of the interesting people you met. Here was an atmosphere—not that of Cornwall but equally congenial—an atmosphere of sophisticated beauty, the beauty of glass and porcelain and napery, of frieze and picture and book. He loved colour, and I remember the rose-red of his sitting-room in Whitehall Court, the lovely green of a carpet in his office. On the day I was to meet Miss Jesse I was a little early, and I sat in the long, narrow drawing-room of his house in Belgravia, happy to be in such beautiful surroundings. On the table lay a small book of poems I had dedicated to him, and it was open—he had evidently been looking at it.

How charming he was to us all—what a kind friend!

I am always meeting people in whose

FRYN TENNYSON JESSE.
Photo. E. O. Hoppé.

hearts is an incurable feeling of loss because William Heinemann was taken from us so soon, so unnecessarily soon.

From the mists of the past that particular evening stands out brightly. Miss Jesse proved to be a sort of water-spirit, a Lorelei. Hers the hair that should be combed "with a golden comb," and hers the sea-coloured eyes which won Aphrodite the name of Glaucopis; but I think she would rather be on a boat than a rock, rather be yachting among the Hebrides than whiling poor fishermen out of ships to their destruction.

All her young life she had been a wanderer, which accounts for her stories of West

Indian life, but she was in a measure Cornish. Her great-uncle was Tennyson, the poet, himself a Lincolnshire man, and through the d'Eyncourts she is of Norman descent. In other words, to her Celtic imagination has been added the strong framework, the bone, of the Saxon and Scandinavian.

The first time I saw her she was wearing green—an old shawl embroidered with deep-red roses, a shawl which struck a Victorian note. She sat sideways on the leather seat of the fender, a most ethereal-looking creature, and when I heard that she delighted in flying, I forgot that such things as aeroplanes existed, and expected her to unfold gauzy green wings.

Mr. Heinemann told me the firm had a very amusing time when " Secret Bread " was published. A telegram was sent to the printers : " Rush through secret bread." As it had been dispatched by people of such a suspiciously German name as Heinemann, the Post Office sent it, not to the printer, but to the War Office. As the authorities were then considering the matter of the bread ration, the War Office decided that the suspicious telegram must be looked into, and early the following morning the police arrived to investigate. The story, of course, caused some amusement—in fact, Miss Jesse said she was " wearing a smile that you could tie behind in a bow."

The Cornish " Jesse " is as intriguing to the public as the name Galsworthy. Should it be Jess or Jes-see ? I asked Fryn, and she said : " My sister prefers it one way and I the other. So we are always announced as Miss Jess and Miss Jes-see."

That evening we drove away from Mr. Heinemann's together, and I remember her turning to me in the taxi and asking if I were as fond of the dear man as she was. The answer being satisfactory, she told me how good to her he had been—and many another young author has told a similar tale. When " The Mask " appeared in the *English Review*, Mr. Heinemann had asked her to call. She had two novels begun, and these he offered to publish. Her difficulty lay in finding the time to complete them ; for, in the writing world, having to earn a living almost invariably means magazine and newspaper work. It might have been years before she would have had the leisure to finish her books, and by so long would the fact that she was a writer who counted have remained unknown.

Mr. Heinemann believed in her work. He showed his faith by giving her advance royalties so that she might work in peace. When—perhaps a little aghast at having to settle down and do what was expected of her—she protested that she was lonely, he sent her a dog. There was nothing for it. She must needs work !

MY own quarrel with her is that she is so seldom alone. For some years she has had a little house in one of those queer corners of London which are of a green appearance, are, indeed, almost squares. Two rows of houses face each other across long gardens, with a narrow path, which is a blind alley, between. Lilacs bloom there in the spring, evergreen trees rise up to shut off neighbour from opposite neighbour, and you are in the green depths of the country, yet round the corner are all the shops that an urban dweller needs, and three minutes down the hill runs the roaring river of High Street, Kensington. Fryn found that little house for herself, and there she has been living with several kindly women—no, I don't know that they all live there. I think only some of them do. I feel that they are persons who cherish her, probably see that she has food at proper intervals, and by answering the telephone preserve her mornings intact. I have seen them busy about her. Once I sat with her while somebody washed her glinty golden hair. Another time, while somebody dressed it and set in it a wondrous green comb which everybody believed to be Fryn's but which wasn't. Yet another time, while somebody telescoped the third and fourth acts of a play into one.

In return for these kind offices I have seen her paint a sign for one of the body-guard who happened to be opening a hat-shop. I arrived in time to suggest that a black dab should be placed on the cheek of that patch-and-powder beauty. The painting was being done in Fryn's bedroom. The lady of the hat-shop sat on the fine old four-poster, others dropped in to watch the progress of the sign-painting. Fryn worked away and I——

The house is full of early-Victorian furniture and ornaments. The period, as you may see by that wonderful little story, " The White Riband," interests her. Wax flowers, paintings on glass, Berlin wool work —I can't imagine why she likes the things. Yet I pandered to her taste for them (when she admitted she was married) by giving her a pair of the wholly inadequate ewers and basins of that period.

She has, in spite of her ethereal appearance, a hard business quality which has helped her to acquire beautifully inlaid tables and carven beds at her own price. While she discusses with the shopman some object she does not mean to buy, she will have seen something in the murk at the

back which, at the last moment, she bids for innocently and is almost given. It is this quality which has helped her to make a success of life.

For long before she announced it, her marriage was, among her friends, a *secret de Polichinelle;* but if she liked to be mysterious about it, well, why not? After all, she looked happy, and that was what mattered. If she had worn a harassed air, had pined and peaked, I can imagine the bodyguard taking a sterner interest.

After all, she was more amusing about it than she had any idea. She would talk in a way that only a married woman could; and then expect you to believe—no, I don't know that she did. It was probably her way of letting you know. I was walking down Bedford Street with her one day and I noticed a jade ring on her finger. "Are you married, Fryn?" I asked, apropos of that ring, and she walked on without answering. "Ah!" I thought, "she won't lie about it."

Which, of course, was the truth.

SHE used to go yachting with Himself, ostensibly to write plays with him, and she took an old uncle to—er—play propriety. I was at Mr. Heinemann's one day when I was told that they had received a photograph of her in a bathing-dress—a photograph which had been taken on board. They sent for it to show me, but it was not where it had been left. Someone had borrowed it to show to someone else. We tracked them down, but only to find that someone else had got it. Finally we discovered that the senior partner had taken it home—doubtless to show his wife. "You have no idea," said my particular friend in the office, "how beautiful she looks in that photo."

One evening the bodyguard telephoned to know if I would go down, as Miss Jesse was leaving England the following day. When I reached the green-set house, I found Fryn having her hair washed in a scullery which she had had turned into a bathroom. Later, however, while she dried it by a gas-fire, she was able to talk. Kneeling by the glow, she looked from under the veil of her shining hair and spoke of her deep happiness—she then told me that she was married, had been for a long time, and that it would be in the papers next day.

I felt sympathetic and tried to look surprised. After failing in the latter, I allowed myself to inquire why she had chosen to marry without a wedding. She explained at length, and it appeared that she had theories about marriage.

She did not think a woman should be dependent, and she had wanted to prove she could support herself. When it became obvious, owing to the failure of a play, that she couldn't—did she act in the natural feminine way and turn to Him? No, no. She was of stouter stuff! She pawned her jewels and set to work at something more lucrative. In the end she triumphantly proved her point. Her novels, her short stories, her work as a reader, her plays, all brought in money. She was able to buy herself a water-mill and turn it into a home—a water-mill on the upper reaches of an estuary, which would enable her to boat and swim as much as she desired. She was placed, she stood on her own feet, and if she chose to marry a rich man, it was as a queen in her own right.

She had certainly proved that she could support herself; but with that practical inconsistency that makes a woman so successful in any kind of business she may take up, she had proved it after the event. Fryn had not left anything to chance. She had married her man and then set out to show him what she could do. It reminded me of intensive culture. Also, perhaps, of the old adage about "first catching your hare."

And she thought we did not know where she spent so much of her time! With what the dear ostrich imagined a convincing secrecy, she had covered her tracks—tracks that led to her husband's side.

Thanks to him, one of my sons was under-studying a part in "Debureau," and on the night of the dress rehearsal Fryn and Captain Harwood (why should I conceal from you his name?) had been sitting together looking on, sitting very cosily together in the sight of all men. "What did they think at the theatre?" she asked, after my failure to seem surprised by her tale of joy; and I could tell her they thought it a platonic friendship. I don't think she was altogether pleased.

She left next day on the yacht, but this time without the uncle, who happened to be the one really astonished person among her kith and kin. He had gone with her and her husband on several voyages and he had never suspected.

I wonder what she thought of that?

Last time I saw her she was in bed as a preparation for a journey to India; but in bed in her husband's flat, and looking amazingly content. My young son came to fetch me, and—as she happened to have on the prettiest boudoir cap I have ever seen—she let him come up. Fryn has a way with her. As we went home-along, the boy was unwontedly silent. Presently he sighed with:—

"Oh, Mums, isn't she lovely?"

(To be continued.)

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—4.

THE SHAFTESBURY AVENUE MURDER

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY
S. SEYMOUR LUCAS AND F. E. HILEY.

WINDERGATE, of the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard, having paid an unsuccessful visit to the office in Shaftesbury Avenue, showed a disposition to linger. Miss Ann Lancaster, who was not really busy, leaned back in her chair with her fingers resting idly upon the typewriter.

"I am sorry about Mr. Rocke," she said. "He is very uncertain these days."

"Busy?" her caller inquired.

"Some special work," Ann told him.

"Anything in my way?"

She shook her head.

"Some documents in cipher which one of our agents in Berlin came across and sent to the Foreign Office. Mr. Rocke goes down there every morning."

"What time do you close for lunch?" Windergate asked, glancing at his watch.

"About one, as a rule," was the careless reply. "We have no fixed hour."

Windergate coughed. He was a self-contained, self-possessed person, but he gave one the impression of being momentarily a little nervous.

"You wouldn't care to—I wonder whether you'd come and have lunch with me?" he invited.

Ann was taken by surprise. There had never been anything about her companion's manner to suggest that feminine society was one of his distractions.

"It is very kind of you," she said, hesitatingly. "I don't bother about lunch much, as a rule."

"We'll make up for it to-day, then," Windergate declared, recovering his confidence. "We'll go to a little quiet place I know of, close here. Never any crowd there."

Ann closed down her desk, retired to a corner of the room, and put on her hat.

"It's very nice of you," she repeated. "I am quite ready. You realize, don't you, that I am in my working clothes?"

Windergate glanced at her once or twice as they passed through the streets, and his previous impressions were all confirmed. She was dressed with the utmost simplicity, but she possessed to the full that air of nameless elegance which is the heritage of the chosen few of her sex. Her walk was graceful, her poise pleasant but not exuberant. She took no trouble to conceal the fact that the little expedition was a pleasure to her.

"I love nice restaurants," she confided, as she unfolded her napkin and looked around her with interest. "I've only seen the outside of this one."

"Don't you ever go out to lunch with Mr. Rocke?" he asked her.

"Twice in my life," she replied, "and then it was when we were working together. As a matter of fact," she went on, "Mr.

Copyright, 1923, by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

Rocke is very careless about lunch. If he is interested at all in his work, he just doesn't leave off."

"And then he grumbles at his digestion," Windergate observed.

She laughed.

"He has fits of being very sorry for himself," she declared, "and fits of forgetting that there's anything wrong with him, which, as a matter of fact, there isn't. His latest fad, though, is that it's quieter in the office between one and half-past two. It can't really make any difference, because we never hear anything of the people in the other part of the building."

Ann, like most healthy young women, accustomed though she was to the slightest of lunches, was perfectly well able to adapt herself to her host's views upon the subject. Windergate, away from his professional atmosphere, was a very pleasant, almost an amusing companion. She finished her coffee and cigarette with regret.

"Thank you for an excellent lunch," she said, as she drew on her gloves. "I expect Mr. Rocke will be back now, if you like to come round and see him."

"I think I will," Windergate acquiesced, "although I haven't anything very important to say."

"No news, I suppose?"

Her companion made a little grimace.

"No," he admitted. "I am afraid this is one of those cases where a lunatic has proved himself cleverer than two sane men. We shall have him some day, though."

"I hope so," Ann prayed, with sudden fervour.

"It was the cunning of the lunatic which helped him to evade us," Windergate observed, as they started on their homeward walk. "It will be the inevitable persistence of the lunatic which will deliver him into our hands some day."

They reached the block of buildings in which Rocke's offices were situated. Ann looked at the board and found the key missing.

"He is here, then," she remarked, as she preceded her companion to the lift. "Has Mr. Rocke been in long?" she asked the girl in attendance.

"Can't say, miss," the latter replied. "I've only just come on duty."

They stepped out of the lift at its destination, and climbed the last flight of stairs. Ann opened the door of the outer office and, crossing the room, threw open the inner door.

"Mr. Windergate is here to see you, Mr. Rocke," she announced.

The figure seated at the desk made no movement.

"Mr. Windergate——" Ann began again.

Then, with a little cry, she broke off in her sentence. Something in the limp, unnatural pose of the man seated in the revolving chair suddenly terrified her. She sprang forward, but Windergate was quicker. He stood between her and the figure at the desk.

"Miss Lancaster," he said, "you had better go back to your office. Try and compose yourself. Ring up Scotland Yard for me, and ask for Harrison and Kimball to be sent round here at once."

"Has anything happened to him?" she asked, shivering in every limb.

"I am afraid that he is dead," Windergate answered, gravely. "There is a bullet wound through his temple. But——"

The connecting door leading to the outer office was suddenly opened. Rocke stepped in.

"What the devil's all this?" he demanded, irritably.

DANIEL, Sir Francis Worton—commonly known as Q 20, the head of the new Secret Service Department represented by those mystic letters—and Windergate met, a fortnight later, at the former's office for an informal conference.

"The subject of my murder is naturally an interesting one to me," Daniel observed, as he swung round in his chair and offered cigarettes to the other two men. "Is it my fancy, Windergate, or are you moving a little more slowly in this matter than usual? You can't afford too many failures, you know."

"Departmental jealousy again!" Windergate declared, lightly. "As a matter of fact, we have gone a little farther than we have thought it wise to make public. I am now in a position to tell you the name of the man who was shot whilst sitting in your chair."

"Has anyone identified him, then?" Daniel asked.

"Not voluntarily," was the thoughtful reply. "As you know, no papers at all were found upon the dead man, but a doll in a cardboard box was discovered in his pocket. We made inquiries amongst the London buyers of such articles, and discovered one firm who had just ordered a quantity from a German agent visiting London. The rest was quite simple. The man's name was Israel Kasters, and he had a single room in a block of offices in the Tottenham Court Road."

"I can add a little to that information," Worton observed. "Kasters came over here in the wake of a well-known German financier, some months ago. He remained behind with the avowed intention of opening up some trade. My department has kept him shadowed since his arrival. There has been

nothing to report. He seems, indeed, to have been an industrious, hard-working man. The only suspicious thing about him that came to our knowledge was that he was certainly in communication with people in Berlin whom we do not trust."

Daniel threw the remainder of his cigarette into the grate, and took a fresh one from the open box by his side. His manner had become graver, his tone was almost portentous.

"The first half of the mystery now solves itself," he said. "The visit of Israel Kasters to this office at a time when he must have believed it to be unoccupied is explained. My work for the last fortnight at the Foreign Office has consisted in deciphering some secret correspondence which was seized by one of our agents in Berlin. Occasionally I have brought some of the less important documents to work on here. Kasters evidently got to know of that and came with the idea of purloining them. You will remember that a small jemmy was found upon him."

Worton nodded thoughtfully.

"You and I know the truth, Daniel," he pointed out, "so it is perhaps only fair to take Windergate into our confidence. These documents, which one of my agents seized and handed over to the Foreign Office, comprise, amongst other things, a list of places where secret stocks of arms exist in Germany. A German agent over here would certainly think it worth while to go to any lengths to regain possession of them."

"I quite see that," Windergate agreed. "The presence of the murdered man in this office is now explained. That, however, only leads us to the baffling part of the whole thing. Why was Kasters, in the pursuit of his avocation as burglar-spy, murdered—and by whom?"

"The first thing one has to make up one's mind about," Worton remarked, "is whether he was shot as Israel Kasters or in mistake for Rocke. When the blinds are drawn here the light is very bad, and anyone entering from this door, and shooting from a few yards away, might easily have thought that the person seated at the desk was the natural occupant of the room. You yourselves admitted that you were deceived for the first few seconds."

"I think we may accept the fact," Windergate observed, "that a man coming here with the idea of murdering Mr. Rocke might have shot the man at the desk, believing he was accomplishing his purpose. But have you any enemies likely to go to such extremes?"

Daniel shook his head.

"I can't imagine that I have," he admitted. "The only really dangerous person I can think of, who I know wouldn't hesitate to commit murder, is the man who slipped through our fingers at Salisbury Plain. We're not on his track, though, so it seems an absurd thing to imagine that he should risk his life and liberty in this fashion. As a first-class lunatic, I think he would be far too cunning."

"My people have been watching a house in Hampstead in connection with that affair," Windergate intervened. "If we are on the right track, he might easily have thought that you were concerned in it."

"The trouble of it is," Daniel reminded them all, "that whereas a dozen people saw Israel Kasters come in, not one of them seems to have seen anybody else whose presence cannot be accounted for. Whoever murdered Kasters couldn't have flown here or come in through the window."

"That's true," Windergate agreed.

ANN knocked at the door and entered.

"There is a young person here who wants to see you, Mr. Rocke," she announced.

"Indeed!" Daniel replied, with gentle sarcasm. "It might possibly have occurred to you that I am by way of being engaged."

Ann remained unruffled, though her tone grew a little colder.

"The young person, I think, has something to say on the subject which you are discussing. She seems rather excited."

"Show her in at once," Daniel directed.

The three men looked up curiously as the young woman was ushered in. She was good-looking in a somewhat bold fashion. She wore a very low-cut blouse and very short skirts.

"I wanted to speak to Mr. Rocke," she announced, a little embarrassed.

"I am Mr. Rocke," he told her. "What can I do for you? We understood that you had something to say about what happened in this office the week before last."

"I have something to say to you," the girl admitted, staring at him in somewhat puzzled fashion. "I have been expecting to hear from you for days."

"From me?" Daniel repeated. "But why?"

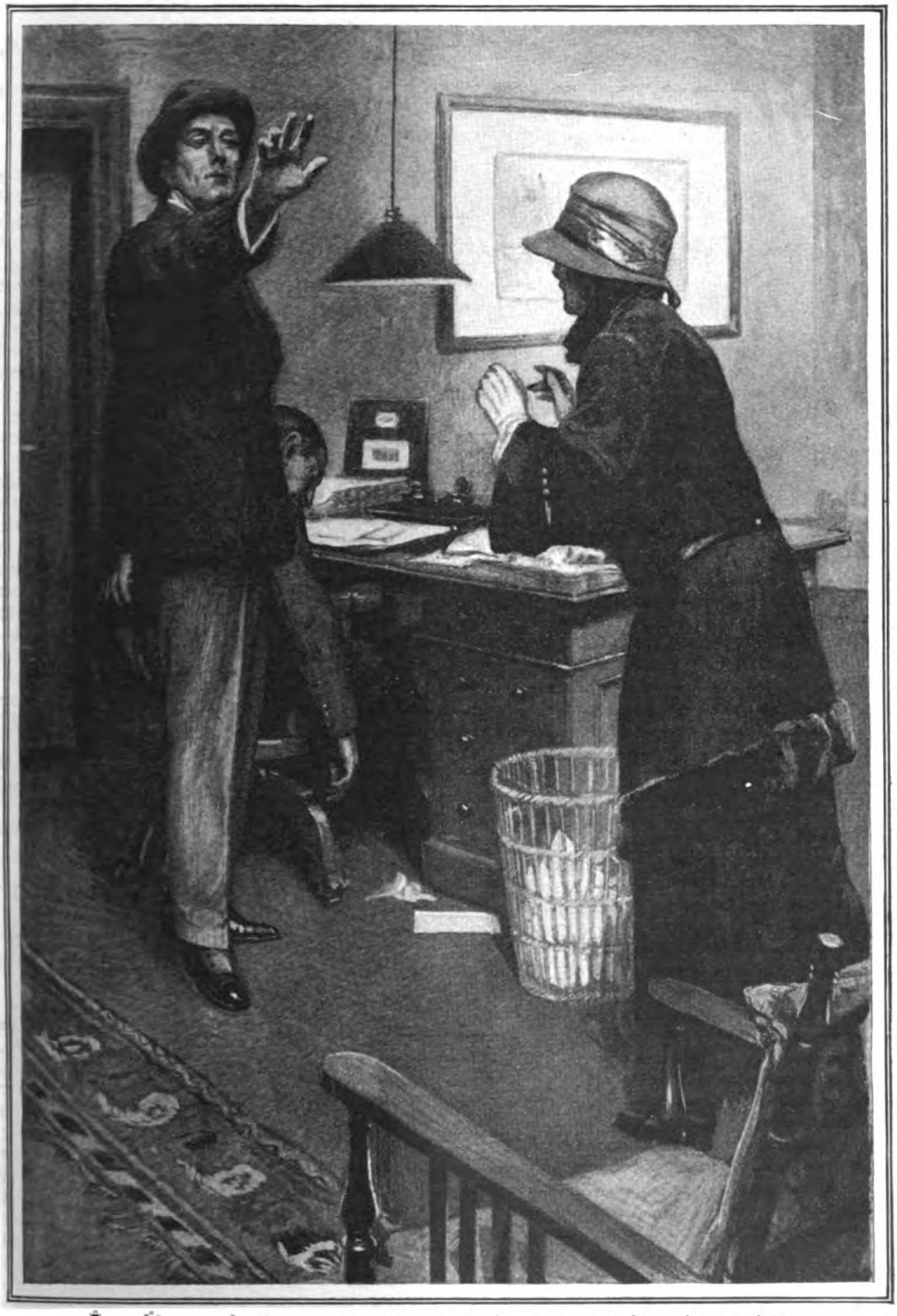
The girl shrugged her shoulders.

"I'll see you another time," she suggested. "You're busy now."

She turned away. Daniel held out his hand.

"Stop a minute," he begged. "I didn't recognize you at first. You're the lift-girl, aren't you?"

"Not so much 'lift-girl,' if you please," she retorted, with a little toss of the head. "I and another young lady have run the lift



Something in the limp, unnatural pose of the man seated in the revolving chair suddenly terrified her. She sprang forward, but Windergate stood between her and the figure at the desk.

here since the building was turned into offices. It's my afternoon out, so I thought I'd just pop up and have a word with you. Another time will do. See you to-morrow, perhaps."

"Look here," Daniel said, "I don't quite understand you. These gentlemen are quite as much interested in the affair as I am. One of them is from Scotland Yard, and we were talking it over as you came in. If you have anything to say, now is the time."

She looked at him in amazement.

"Are you bluffing?" she demanded.

"I certainly am not," Daniel replied. "What do you mean by 'bluffing'? If there's anything you know about this affair, now is the time to tell it to us."

The girl swung round on her heel.

"Thank you," she concluded, "I'll choose my own time."

She pushed her way out of the office. They heard the outer door close and her footsteps on the stairs. They all three looked at one another.

"That young woman knows something," Windergate remarked, solemnly.

"The queer part of it is," Daniel observed, "that she appears to think I do, too."

Windergate, on his way out into the street, found their recent visitor studying the name-board. He raised his hat. The girl glanced at him with some interest but without recognition.

"I saw you a few minutes ago in Mr. Rocke's office," Windergate reminded her.

"Oh, you were one of them three, were you?" she remarked. "Didn't recognize you."

"I wonder whether you would favour me with a few minutes' conversation?" he suggested.

"I'm not going to tell you anything—at least, I don't think so," she replied.

"All the same, just a cup of tea over at that little place opposite," he urged. "I won't keep you long."

She looked at him doubtfully. Windergate was very presentable, she had nothing particular to do, and men were the one interest of her life.

"You won't make yourself a nuisance asking too many questions?" she demanded.

"I shall probably forget to ask any questions at all," he assured her, tactfully.

The girl passed out into the street by his side.

"We won't go there," she said, indicating the tea-shop to which he had pointed. "There's a much nicer one a few steps farther down. It's a bit more expensive, but it's not so crowded. You get little tables to yourself, and pink-shaded lights. Quite stylish!"

"Wherever you say," Windergate agreed, cheerfully. "You lead and I'll follow."

"Anywhere?" she asked, with an arch glance.

"Try me," he replied, gallantly.

THEY entered the tea-rooms of her choice and found a sufficiently retired table. Windergate was shrewd enough to avoid all reference to the subject on which he desired information, until the meal was nearing completion. He learned that his companion's name was Rose Paxton; that she earned thirty-eight shillings a week, which, after she had paid for her board and lodging, left her a very insufficient amount to attire herself in the manner she desired; that gentlemen were sometimes generous; that she liked her companion's tie and his voice, and that she had a weakness for grey eyes; that she loved the pictures, but preferred the theatres when a suitable escort presented himself; that she was for the moment unattached, most of her beaux having failed to come up to the financial standard required. Confidence having been thoroughly established, he ventured, as though the matter had suddenly come into his mind, to ask her a question.

"What were you going to say to Mr. Rocke, if you had found him alone this afternoon?" he inquired, curiously.

The girl had been talking so much that she had lost the gift of reticence. She leaned forward in her chair.

"Are you a friend of Mr. Rocke?" she asked.

"Certainly."

"You're not out to do him any harm?"

"Quite the contrary," he assured her.

"Well, I came in to ask him," she explained, "why he hadn't kept a promise he made me some time ago."

"What promise did he make?"

"It was on a certain afternoon, not so very long ago," she continued, mysteriously. "I took him down from the sixth floor alone, and he gave me the biggest tip I'd ever had—a ten-shilling note. 'Look here,' he said, just before he stepped out, 'I want you to forget that you ever brought me up, in case you should be asked. Wipe it out of your mind—you understand?' I asked him what the game was, but he didn't reply. 'You do as I ask,' he insisted, 'and there'll be a nice little sum for your banking account.' He said something about taking me to the theatre, too, but just then we reached the ground floor and out he shot. In about five minutes, if you please, in he came again, just muttered 'Sixth floor,'

"He gave me the biggest tip I'd ever had—a ten-shilling note. 'Look here,' he said, 'I want you to forget that you ever brought me up, in case you should be asked—you understand?'"

and got out, when he arrived there, without as much as a word or a 'good afternoon.' That's how he's been all the time since, as stand-offish as you like. I made up my mind I'd go and have a talk with him at the first opportunity, and that's why I turned up there this afternoon."

"Did the day you are speaking of happen to be the day on which a man was murdered in Mr. Rocke's office?"

"Yes."

He was thoughtful for a moment.

"Were you at the inquest?" he asked.

No," she replied. "The other girl was.

The day the thing happened was really my afternoon off. I was standing talking to Bessie—that's the other young lady—when a boy she wanted to speak to came down the stairs. A bell rang from the sixth floor, and I took the lift up so as to give her a moment with this chap."

"And you found Mr. Rocke waiting for you on the sixth floor?"

"Yes. Everything just as I've told you. What should you do about it?"

Windergate considered the matter for a moment.

"What you have told me is very important," he said.

"Why are you so interested?" she asked.

"Because I belong to the C.I.D. at Scotland Yard," he told her. "I am really in charge of this affair."

She looked at him for a moment, blankly disappointed.

"A 'tec!" she exclaimed. "I thought you were a gentleman!"

"I am man enough to enjoy talking to a pretty girl, anyhow," he declared, "and if you liked me well enough to let me make you a little present——"

"Oh, I like you all right," she interrupted, "but it isn't quite the same thing. I thought you'd brought me out to tea because you liked the look of me—taken a fancy to me, or something of that sort. Seems now as though you'd been kidding all the time."

"I haven't," he assured her, earnestly. "Look here, I'll take you to the theatre any time you like this week."

She smiled at him beatifically.

"You're a dear!" she exclaimed. "And as to what I've told you, it's the truth, after all, and he hasn't kept his word. What should you do about it?"

"I should wait until to-morrow," Windergate advised, "and then go and see him again."

"Righto!" the girl assented. "And what about Friday night for the theatre?"

"I'll get the seats," he promised. "We'll have dinner in the Trocadero Grill Room at seven o'clock."

"You haven't half an hour to spare for the pictures now, I suppose?" she asked wistfully, as they reached the street.

He glanced at his watch.

"Come along," he invited. "We'll go opposite. I can just manage an hour."

They crossed the street, the girl's fingers already feeling for his arm.

DANIEL, in those days, was oppressed by vague but very singular apprehensions. He became suddenly convinced of the fact that he was being watched, that he walked all the time in some sort of danger. He had stronger locks put on to both his doors, and he went armed. He was not a nervous man, but the feeling was persistent and ineradicable. He walked down Shaftesbury Avenue as though he were passing through a jungle in an untrodden forest, with enemies on every side. The men and women who jostled him on the pavement all became objects of suspicion. He grew even more irritable and captious than was his wont. At his club he fancied that people were beginning to avoid him. Windergate, too, seemed to have lost interest in tracing the murderer of Israel Kasters, and remained curiously aloof. Even Ann, resentful of his frequent fits of ill-temper, became unapproachable. One morning he sent for her. He was feeling particularly depressed and bad-tempered.

"Miss Lancaster," he said, "I saw you dining at the Milan last night with Windergate."

"Did you?" she remarked, quietly.

"What the mischief's the matter with Windergate and you and all of them?" he burst out. "You seem to dry up into monosyllables whenever I come near, and Windergate avoids the place as though we had the plague. Tell me, is Windergate ass enough to think that I killed Israel Kasters?"

"Mr. Windergate does not talk to me about such matters," she answered.

"What the devil does he talk to you about, then? You see enough of him!" Daniel exclaimed, petulantly.

She smiled.

"I think that Mr. Windergate admires me," she confessed.

He looked at her, frowning but intent.

"I suppose you are a good-looking girl," he admitted, as though the idea had occurred to him for the first time.

"Mr. Rocke!"

"Well, you don't find that offensive, do you?" he snapped. "I've nothing, of course, to do with your private relations with Mr. Windergate, but I should like to know whether you two are up to anything behind my back. I am perfectly certain that I am being shadowed."

"I know nothing of this," Ann assured him.

"Does Windergate believe that lift-girl's cock-and-bull story?" he demanded.

"Why not ask him?"

"He is always engaged or out when I try to get hold of him."

"Mr. Windergate is a very busy man," she observed.

He looked at her steadily for a moment.

"You've nothing to say to me?"

"Nothing," she replied, boldly enough, but with a little choking in her throat.

"Very good," he concluded, quietly. "You can go."

That night, Ann unburdened herself to her new friend.

"Mr. Windergate," she confided, "can't something be done about Mr. Rocke? He is getting absolutely unbearable. He knows that you are keeping away from him; he knows that I see you sometimes. He saw us, in fact, at the Milan together last night. He appealed to me only this morning to tell him what it all meant. I had to fence with him, and since then he hasn't spoken a word to me. He is looking so ill, too."

"You take a great interest in Mr. Rocke," Windergate remarked, a little jealously.

"Naturally," she answered. "Mr. Rocke and I have been through a great tragedy together. He is rather abrupt in his manner, but he has always meant to be kind. I can't bear to have him treat me as he is doing now."

"I suppose we shall have to come to an understanding very soon," Windergate admitted. "Stick it out for a few more days, please. Now, what about some dinner in the grill-room, and we can see the new film afterwards?"

She sighed.

"I don't feel like it to-night," she confessed. "I don't know why, but I feel thoroughly unsettled."

He eyed her curiously.

"Let me see, what is Rocke doing?" he asked.

"I sent you a copy of the page from his diary," she reminded him.

He nodded.

"I passed it on to Inspector Gresson," he said. "As a matter of fact, I remember, though. He is dining with Professor Mayer up at Hampstead. We might have a little dinner in the grill-room, then I'll just see how they are doing their job."

"You'll find me a very dull companion," she warned him.

"I'll take my risk," he decided.

At a few minutes past eleven that evening a very dramatic scene was being enacted in a street upon the outskirts of Hampstead. The street was a short thoroughfare, with houses on either side standing well back from the road and protected by gardens of considerable extent. There were rows of trees bordering the pavements, interfering slightly with the illumination. Around one of the trees a singular little group was gathered. A girl, apparently recovering from a faint, was seated on the ground with her back to a tree. There was a cut upon her forehead and a bruise upon her neck. She was ghastly pale and evidently in a terrified state. Standing by her side was a uniformed policeman with a note-book in his hand. A man who might have been a doctor was standing on the other side, and a young couple—a housemaid from one of the houses near, and her young man—were standing arm-in-arm, looking on with keen interest. The girl was just finding strength to speak.

"My name is Amy Kinlake," she told them. "I teach music. I have been playing accompaniments—at a house near. I was on my way home. A taxi overtook me—just here. A man got out and came towards me. I thought it must be someone I knew, or I should have called out. He advanced in quite an ordinary fashion, taking off his hat. Suddenly he seized me and pressed a handkerchief against my mouth. There was a horrible smell—it wasn't chloroform—nothing like it—and—and——"

"Go on, miss, if you can," the constable begged.

"I couldn't move. I felt numb," she continued. "I think he must have lifted me into the taxicab, when I gave a little scream that this gentleman must have heard. I suppose the man was frightened. He pushed me away, and I fell down on the kerb. The taxicab drove off."

"Which way did it go?" the policeman asked.

"It turned the corner into Laburnum Road."

"Can you describe the man?" the doctor inquired. "I have sent for my car, and when it comes I will take you home. In the meantime, in case you should lose consciousness again, tell us what he was like. I should like your description, although I saw him myself."

"So did we," the young man and the housemaid observed.

"Am I going to be ill, then?" the girl faltered.

"Most improbable," the doctor assured her. "At the same time, the drug which your assailant used is a strange one to me. I cannot tell what its effects may be. I should like you to tell us in your own words what the man was like. I will go on to the police-station after I have taken you home."

The girl opened her lips. She was beginning to speak when her face seemed suddenly blanched once more with a new terror. She was looking along the strip of pavement which stretched towards the corner where the taxicab had disappeared. A man was approaching with brisk, even footsteps. As he came near, she shrieked

"There he is!" she cried. "He's come back! Don't let him get near me!"

"Don't you be afraid, miss," the policeman answered. "If this is the man, we've got him, for sure."

They watched him curiously. At the last moment, seeing the group upon the pavement, he hesitated. The policeman stepped forward.

"I'd like a word with you, sir," he said.

"What's the matter?" the new-comer demanded, drawing a little nearer.

"That's the man!" the girl exclaimed, hysterically. "That's the man who dragged me into the taxi!"

"That's the man, right enough," the youth asserted. "I seen him distinctly under the light."

"It's he!" the girl moaned. "Keep him away!"

"Why he has returned I don't know," the doctor added to the policeman, in an undertone, "but I'm certain that's the man I saw leaning out of the taxicab."

"You'll have to go to the station with me," the policeman told him, watching for any suspicious movement on the accused man's part.

"May I ask the charge?" the latter inquired.

"An assault upon this young lady," the policeman answered.

"Absurd!" was the contemptuous rejoinder. "My name is Daniel Rocke, and I am well known at the Foreign Office and the British Museum as an interpreter of codes and ciphers. I have just left Professor Mayer's house at the corner of the street."

Then Windergate appeared out of the gloom, followed by one of his henchmen.

"I want this man," he announced. "You know me, constable—Inspector Windergate, of the C.I.D."

"That's all right, sir," the constable replied, saluting.

The rescued man appeared a little stupefied, but it was not until he was in Windergate's car that he opened his mouth.

"What is the meaning of this?" he demanded.

"A plant of a sort," was the brief reply. "I'll tell you all about it now, if you like. It was the lift-girl's story at your office which set me thinking. We're up against our old enemy, Sir Joseph Londe, again, and I tell you he's the most dangerous thing I ever struck, and the cleverest. He's studied you to some purpose, made up so that no two people could tell you apart. Even my own men have been baffled. He came to your office with the intention of killing you, shot that fellow Kasters, thinking he was you, and walked calmly out of the place. You arrived five minutes later, and that lift-girl would have sworn till her dying day that you'd only left the flat that time ago. See the idea? Since then you've been shadowed. I guessed something of this sort would happen. We knew you were dining at Professor Mayer's, and that you would be coming this way before long. Londe might have really wanted to abduct the girl. He very likely did, if he could have done it safely. Anyhow, he did it, made up so that anyone in the world would have sworn you were the assailant, threw the girl out when he saw that he couldn't get away with her, and made off for safety."

"Where are we going to now?"

"The Marylebone Police-Station. We arrested the driver of his taxicab whilst he got out and walked to the corner of the street, and put one of our own men on the box. I told him to drive there without stopping. We've telephoned for constables to surround the cab directly it arrives."

"Why didn't you tell me what was going on before?" was the somewhat pertinent inquiry.

"Because you'd have spoilt the game by always looking out for him," Windergate answered. "Besides, it was a police job, not yours. We needed you for a stalking-horse. All in your own interests, Rocke. The humour of it is—if it can be called humour—that your other self made advances to the lift-girl which you failed to carry out. Hence her visit to your office. She turned informer entirely out of pique."

"Little hussy! But that fellow Londe—he'll tumble to it, for certain. He'll get out of the cab before it reaches the police-station."

"He won't do much good," Windergate replied. "I had two plain-clothes men on motor-bicycles, one each side of the cab."

The other laughed a little bitterly.

"Yours is a regular policeman's game," he scoffed. "I wish I'd known what you were up to. I'd have given you better advice."

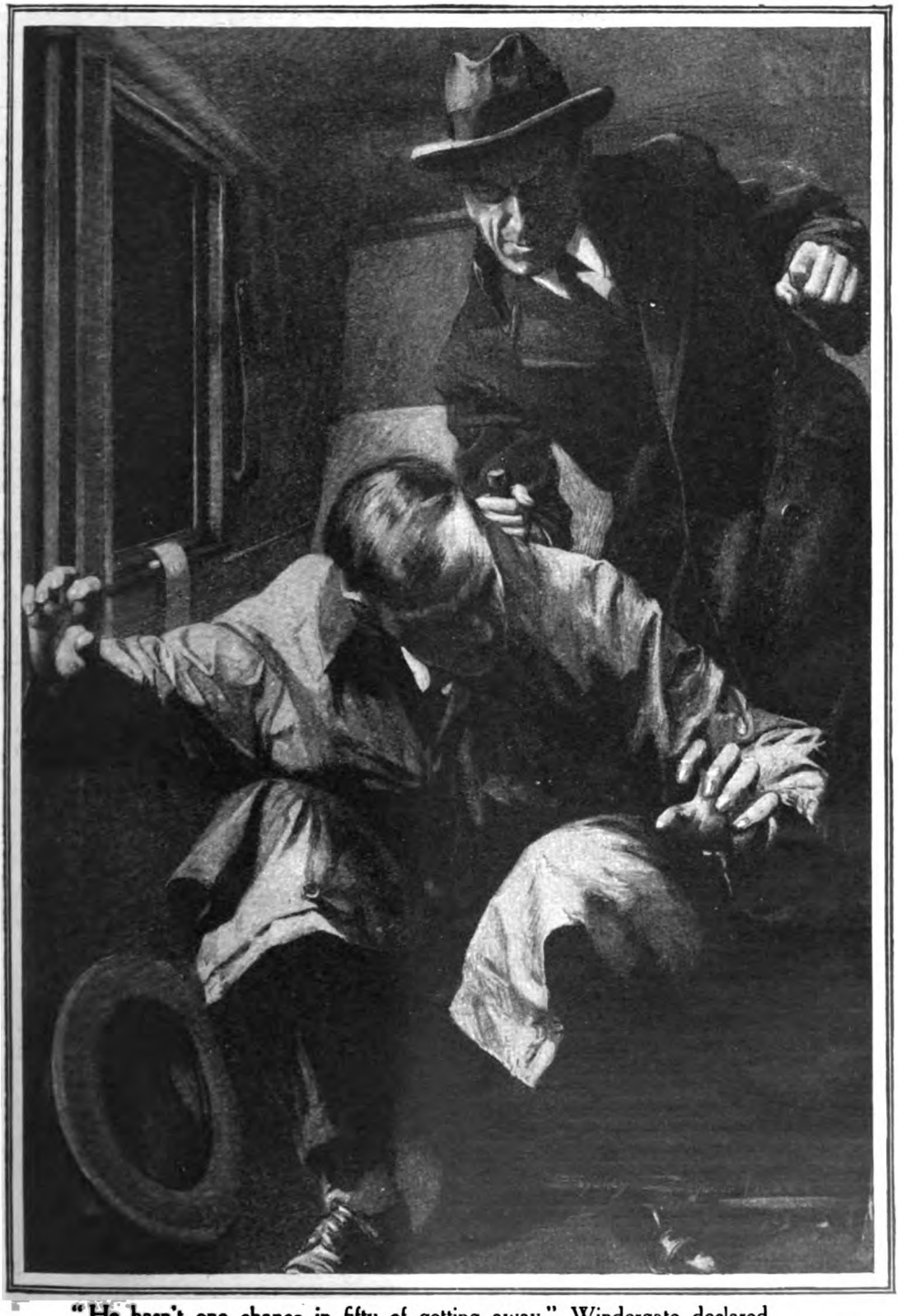
"What do you mean?" Windergate demanded.

"I mean," was the contemptuous reply, "that you haven't a man in your Force with half the brains that Londe has. If you think he'll sit quietly in that taxicab and step out at Marylebone Police-Station, you're more ingenuous than I thought you."

"He hasn't one chance in fifty of getting away," Windergate declared.

His companion glanced out of the window. They had reached the spot which he had fixed upon in his mind.

"Neither have you," he answered, driving the knife which he had suddenly drawn from his pocket between the detective's shoulders.



"He hasn't one chance in fifty of getting away," Windergate declared.

"Neither have you," his companion answered, driving the knife which he had suddenly drawn from his pocket between the detective's shoulders.

DANIEL ROCKE was Windergate's first visitor. The latter was sitting up in bed, wasted but convalescent. The two men shook hands in a somewhat chastened manner.

"The lunatic's done us again," Windergate groaned. "Nearly did for me, too. A fortieth part of an inch would have settled my hash."

"You had no suspicion?" Daniel asked.

"Not the slightest. I was as certain that it was you who strolled up and whom I took away from the crowd as I am about you at the present moment. You see what happened? Simple but amazingly daring! Just the sort of thing a lunatic would have planned! Give me a tablespoonful of that whisky and some soda-water, Rocke. I'm allowed it three times a day."

Daniel measured out the whisky generously, added the soda-water, and passed it to the invalid.

"The fellow had been shadowing you for a fortnight," Windergate proceeded. "He must have known you were dining at the Professor's, must have known what time you were likely to leave. He was in earnest about the girl all right. When he found he couldn't bring that off, he made for his taxi. He saw that the driver had been changed, and tumbled to the whole thing, of course. Told him to stop at the Professor's and wait for a few minutes. We'd ordered the chauffeur to go anywhere he was directed first, so long as he wound up at Marylebone Police-Station.

"Two motor-cyclists were to pick up the taxicab at the corner of the avenue, as they did. Londe walked up that flagged path to the Professor's, and hid behind a shrub. In five minutes you were out. You thought the Professor had sent for a taxi, and stepped into it at once. They drove you to the police-station, as per instructions. Londe comes out of the garden and sees the little crowd round the girl. He also sees me hanging round with the car. He bangs the Professor's gate behind him and walks casually up to us. It was the most audacious thing I have ever heard of. He gambled on my interference, and of course it came off. We talked together on the way to the station, and, believe me, I never doubted him for a moment. His voice seemed a bit thick, but I knew you had a cold. Then, all of a sudden—well, you know the rest."

"The first taxicab man was our greatest disappointment," Daniel observed. "His story turned out to be perfectly true. Londe picked him up in the Strand—did a bit of character-judging, no doubt—and offered him a tenner to do as he was told for the rest of the evening. The man had never seen Londe before, and was no help to us at all."

Windergate lay for a few moments with half-closed eyes.

"I suppose no one saw Londe get out of the cab?" he asked, presently.

"Not a soul," Daniel replied. "The driver had no idea there was anything wrong until he drew up at the police-station. Londe disappeared like a stone thrown into a mountain tarn."

The nurse put her head in at the door. Daniel rose to his feet.

"Fine violets you've got there, Windergate," he remarked, glancing at the bowl by the side of the bed.

Windergate smiled somewhat sheepishly.

"Very kind of Miss Lancaster," he murmured. "She is coming to see me in a day or two."

Daniel nodded and turned away.

"Well, good-bye, old chap!" he said.

"One word more," Windergate begged. "Only a word, nurse. We are going to get him, Rocke. Mind, that's a certainty."

Daniel opened his lips. The nurse intervened in peremptory fashion. She had seen the flush of colour in her patient's cheeks and the hard light in his eyes.

"Not another word," she ordered, and was obeyed.

DANIEL was curiously engrossed when he left the hospital. There was, indeed, plenty for him to think about. Somewhere, probably close at hand, this lunatic fiend was still at liberty, planning, perhaps, more horrible deeds, always waiting with stealthy zest to pit his cunning against the brains of the man who sought to compass his capture. There was danger lurking for Daniel at any street corner, in any lonely place, whilst this man lived. The drama of it was overpowering. Daniel found himself visualizing the agony of the man, driven to lunacy by the constant though merciful use of his knife upon the screaming hordes of mangled sufferers. There was something terrible in the thought of that slowly-growing madness, the sleepless nights, the visions and fancies, the slow slipping away of reason—the man's soul perished, his whole being obsessed with horrible desires.

And side by side with the memory of these haunting horrors, there crept into Daniel's brain a curious depression, engendered by the sight of that bowl of violets and the sick man's self-conscious acknowledgment of them.

(Another story in this thrilling series will appear next month.)

£100 IN PRIZES FOR ARTISTS.

First Prize £50
Second Prize £30
Third Prize £20

Magazine illustrators make good incomes. Why should YOU not join their ranks? All young artists—and particularly art students—should enter for this competition.

Below we publish a story, and we invite artists to send us two drawings to illustrate it. To the artist whose two drawings, in the opinions of the judges, possess the most merit we will give a PRIZE OF £50; and there will be PRIZES OF £30 and £20 for those placed second and third.

CONDITIONS.

1. Drawings may be in wash, line, chalk, or any other suitable medium, and may be of any size.
2. Drawings must reach us not later than 15th August, 1923, and must be addressed: Artists' Competition, "The Strand Magazine," 8-11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.
3. The Proprietors of "The Strand Magazine" acquire all rights in the winning drawings.
4. The decision of the judges must be taken as final.
5. The Proprietors will endeavour to return all drawings when stamps for postage are enclosed, but cannot accept any responsibility.

The judges are the Editors and Art Editors of "The Strand Magazine" and "Pearson's Magazine."

THE OBJECT OF THIS COMPETITION IS TO DISCOVER AND ENCOURAGE TALENT AMONG THE RISING GENERATION OF ARTISTS.

Further prizes are being offered this month by "Pearson's Magazine" in a similar competition, but with a different story.

Nina's Necklace.

NINA VALREINE had never acted as she did that night.

But first we must explain who Nina was. She was an actress of no ability whatever, to whom a part had been allotted to please the all-powerful gentleman who found the money for the play. Perhaps she may best be described as a lady of more jewellery than talent.

Above all, she was celebrated for a large pearl necklace which was the talk of Paris, and was reported to have cost a million francs. In fact, the director of the theatre had observed when making the engagement: "All right! You can play the part. But it must be understood that you shall wear your necklace." Some unkindly people went so far as to assert that he had muttered through his teeth: "Perhaps the pearls will carry off the oyster."

In short, it was the necklace that people came to see and to applaud, and neither the actress nor the play.

Great, therefore, was the surprise when all at once Nina played the part one night with an intensity of expression, an overwhelming tragic power, of which she was believed to be totally incapable. At rehearsals, and on the first few nights, she had shown herself incompetent and empty-headed beyond all belief. She was horrifying. All the critics, of gallery and stalls alike, summed up their views in the words: "She can't act for nuts! But her necklace is magnificent. Is it really true that it cost a million?"

And yet it happened that, without a moment's warning, Nina Valreine revealed herself as an actress of transcendent genius; that of this scene—as commonplace as any in a mouldy melodrama—she made a moving vision which shook the nerves of the spectators, brought a lump into their throats, and made them catch their breath. From all corners of the house the eyes of the audience followed her with a passionate intentness, while the actor who supported

her played up with a surprising skill. It was a flash of genius as sudden as a flash of lightning. How had it happened?

She had come upon the stage with her usual silly air, uttering her words at random, thinking only of showing off her celebrated necklace. Then all at once she seemed to waken up—to come to life. This effect was produced by the entry of the actor who was to take part with her in the chief scene of the play.

There was, however, nothing in this scene particularly new or striking. The situation was one which had been worn threadbare in a thousand plays.

It concerned a husband ruined by the extravagance of his wife, who refused to share in his misfortune. The selfishness of the wife, the grief and fury of the husband, stung to madness by the sudden revelation of the dreadful truth, his start of indignation, the rage with which he rushed upon the faithless woman, his hands outstretched to strangle her, then his rolling at her feet, with sobs and supplications, which revenged her for the terror of a moment—in order to move an audience with such poor old stuff as this an actress must be possessed of nothing less than real genius.

And this sudden acting of Nina Valreine appeared to be real genius. She was no longer stiff and awkward; she ceased to look as if she were a puppet and to strut, peacock-like, about the stage. Forgetting to make eyes and to finger with her pearls, she made a natural gesture, as of one surprised and startled. A man in a black coat—the husband—had just come upon the stage and was moving towards her, his eyes glittering with restrained anger. Then the spectators saw Nina, the wooden Nina, put off her usual air of listlessness, become agitated, shaken. Before the dark and threatening features of the husband she made a movement, a sharp, scared movement of recoil, her eyes full of mute inquiry and entreaty, which seemed to cry out in all her attitude: "I am frightened! Oh, do not hurt me!"

Then, whilst the scene rolled on to tragedy, Nina, acting to the very life, showed by her every action an agonizing fear. She writhed under the clutch of the two gripping hands; her face grew convulsed, her eyes expressed the wildest terror. For several seconds the spectators, roused out of their torpor, shuddered at the spectacle of a woman in the agonies of death. When the actress, with a startling truth to life, let her head fall backwards, her hair streaming down, and grew slowly weaker and weaker, supported only by the murderer's hands, the house burst into applause. So great was the admiration of the spectators that no one noticed the alteration that had been made in the usual "business" of the play. For in place of throwing himself at the knees of the woman whom he had just treated in such brutal fashion, the husband let his senseless victim fall upon the carpet; for one instant his hands remained clutched about her neck; then, pushing the prostrate woman with his foot, he sharply raised himself erect, regarded her with a hard, dark glance, which sent a thrill through all the audience, and slowly left the stage.

A second burst of cheering marked his exit.

The actor was worthy of the actress; both had just played the scene with a truth which had struck the public to the heart and created an atmosphere of agony—which remained after the actor had gone off—at the sight of that body stretched out in its tragic stillness in the midst of death-like silence. There lay Nina Valreine, motionless, until little by little the effect upon the audience became painful, tense. Some wished to leave the theatre; their nerves, stretched to paroxysm, could endure no more. A few timid cheers, which broke out feebly here and there, sought to draw the actress to some sign of life. But the applause faltered and died away, producing no effect whatever.

The distress of the spectators changed all at once to terror. The other actors of the play came rushing from the wings to the spot where Nina was still lying and bent over her, while the curtain came down sharply amidst the tumult of the house.

"What has happened? Has there been an accident? Why was the play cut short?"

The audience rushed into the corridors towards the entry of the wings. Then the truth ran from mouth to mouth, the strange, appalling truth. Nina Valreine had been assassinated and her necklace stolen!

The details came out later—the explanation of the transformation of the actress. She had been stupefied by the appearance of an unknown actor on the stage. Then it became clear how that terrifying piece of acting which had drawn forth such applause had appeared so striking—it was not acting, but real life.

An unknown man had made his way into the dressing-room of Nina's partner, and had thrust a handkerchief, steeped in chloroform, beneath his nose. Then, dressed in the actor's costume, and made up to resemble him, he had the daring, the audacity, to take his place upon the stage, to play the part to suit the crime.

And there, under the very eyes of the applauding public, he had strangled Nina Valreine and robbed her of the pearls which were her pride.

TAKING PAINS

BY

W·W·JACOBS

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBIN

MR. SILVANUS KEY, changing his position in bed for the third time in five minutes, lay on his back and groaned lamentably.

"I shall never be well," he murmured, faintly. "Forty-three, good-looking, with the best moustache in the town, and done for."

"Has the pain come on again?" inquired his wife, softly.

"Not what you could call pain," said Mr. Key. "There's a red-hot corkscrew going through my left shoulder and a very capable monkey-wrench trying to screw my knee-joints out. The only time I get any rest is when it leaves off to spit on its hands. *O-ow! Ouch! O-o!*"

Mrs. Key rose and, standing by the side of the bed, gazed at him compassionately.

"The doctor doesn't seem to be doing you much good," she murmured.

"That'll do," said the sufferer, sharply. "He is doing his best."

"So it seems," said his wife, dryly. "How you can imagine that stuff out of a bottle can cure you, I can't think. It's the soul that wants treating, not the body. You want to be bathed in a stream of healing thought that would kill all those ideas of pain and——"

"*Ideas!*" shouted Mr. Key. "You wait till you get rheumatism, and neuritis, and gout, and sciatica, all mixed up together, and trying to see which can be the worst. If that blessed Circle of Healers, as you call it, was here I'd punch its head."

"Some of them are women," said his wife.

Mr. Key remarked that he supposed women possessed heads, some of them at any rate, and, licking his lips, speculated on the good to be achieved by knocking all the heads of the Circle together.

"Shake their brains up and make 'em think," he added.

His wife sighed, and bestowed upon him a look of tender and elevating love.

"You are so wilful," she murmured. "If you would only see Mr. Punshon; no foolish and nasty drugs; no clumsy interference with that wonderful combination of soul and body that we know as man. You are simply out of tune with the infinite. *I* am never ill."

"You wouldn't talk like that if you were," said Mr. Key. "You'd know better."

He lay back with closed eyes and pondered gloomily. It was his first real illness and, to an active man fond of rather more than his share of the good things of this life, extremely distasteful. He opened them at a rather sharper twinge than usual and, in a few ill-chosen words, expressed his opinion that members of the medical profession were as useless as the Healers.

"And we work for love," said his wife, improving the occasion.

Mr. Key closed his eyes again, and a faint and unseemly grin passed furtively.

"Miss Olson is a healer, isn't she?" he inquired. "The pretty one. Perhaps I might——"

"She is a neophyte," said his wife, coldly, "the same as myself."

"Nothing doing," murmured the graceless Mr. Key. "Still, if she wants a little practice——"

Mrs. Key implored him not to make a jest of solemn things, and spoke with some eloquence of the marvellous cures effected

Copyright, 1923, by W. W. Jacobs.

by Mr. Punshon. Her husband pointed out, when she had finished, that she had omitted the marvellous case of old Mr. Jackson, who, after being bedridden for over three years, was able, owing to the healer's ministrations, to spend the evenings of his life at the Shakespeare Arms.

"It is easy to mock at things," said Mrs. Key, bitterly. "Mr. Punshon would cure him of that, but the artful old man won't let him go near him."

She went out of the room, and the invalid, after turning in the bed with great care, lay gazing wistfully out of the window. There was a cheerful hum from the street below, and he thought with great bitterness of the happy people there who knew nothing of Uric Acid and its liking for hot joints. A visit from the doctor next day depressed him still more.

"Another week or two?" he gasped.

"You're going on beau-ti-fully," said the other, with an admiring but thoughtless pat on Mr. Key's left knee. "Sorry."

"Don't mind me," said the sufferer, coldly. "Am I to go on taking that beastly physic of yours?"

The doctor nodded. "For some time," he said, grinning. "Shut your eyes when you are taking it and tell yourself it is a vintage port. Smack your lips over it."

Mr. Key closed his eyes and groaned.

"And don't be too sorry for yourself," pursued the other. "You are not nearly so bad as some of my poor patients. Not nearly."

Mr. Key, with a faint smile, said that he could quite believe it. He also expressed his firm belief that their troubles would soon be over—one way or another.

"The last bottle," said his medical attendant, breathing hard, "was not strong enough. You are suffering from depression."

"You never see me at my best," said the other; "the moment you come into the room——"

"Good-bye," said the doctor, briskly.

He went downstairs and, meeting in the hall Mrs. Key, who had just come in, announced in a loud voice that the patient was much better. A louder voice from the sick-room denied all knowledge of the fact.

For two days the patient had no reason to alter his opinion, but on the third he confided to Mrs. Key, with a happy smile, that he certainly felt much easier.

"Since when?" inquired his wife, with a mysterious expression on her face.

Mr. Key pondered. "Yesterday afternoon I got the turn, I think. It's nothing to laugh at."

"I was not laughing, I was smiling," said his wife. "With happiness," she added, hastily. "But I'm not surprised. Mr. Punshon had a half-holiday yesterday afternoon."

Mr. Key gazed at her blankly.

"And instead of going out and enjoying himself stayed at home and gave you 'absent treatment.'"

"Infernal impudence!" gasped the astonished invalid. "I'll—I'll—Punshon—— Oh, Lord! How many people have you told?"

"He could do you much more good if he came into contact with you," said his wife, timidly.

"Fancy," murmured the other, brokenly, "that ginger-bearded fraud—treating *me!* Poor Johnson pulls me round and Punshon steps in and takes the credit. I shall be the laughing-stock of the town. Everybody knows what I've said about him."

"You've said things—to me—about Dr. Johnson too," said his wife.

Mr. Key lay back and regarded her for some time, deep in thought. "All right," he said at last, in a ferocious voice, "have it your own way. I'll give him a run for his money. Punshon has put his hand to the plough and he'd better finish the job. But mind, I shall still take the medicine."

His wife turned upon him a face that literally shone with happiness. "It won't make much difference," she said. "Mr. Punshon's force is much too strong for drugs to interfere with it."

She brought the healer round the following afternoon, and Mr. Key, gazing at the flabby, bearded face, with its pouched eyes and foolish mouth, waited breathlessly for developments.

"I hope it is not going to be painful," he remarked.

"We soothe," said Mr. Punshon, in a deep voice marred by adenoids.

He took a chair by the bed, and taking the patient's hands in his own, leaned forward and fixed upon him the healing glare of a pair of pale and protuberant blue eyes. Mr. Key, closing his, bit his lips to suppress a smile.

For twenty minutes the silence was unbroken except for the odd noises in Mr. Punshon's air-passages. He released the patient's hands and, folding his arms, spoke with authority.

"You feel better!"

"I do," said Mr. Key, in reverent tones. "Waves of—something or other—seemed to go right through me."

Mr. Punshon smiled and, taking out a handkerchief, wiped his brow.

"You mustn't expect to be well all at once," he said, raising a warning hand. "Evil is not destroyed in five minutes. I will come in and give you further treatment to-morrow evening."

Mr. Key thanked him, and for some time after his departure lay smiling seraphically at the ceiling. Under the combined treatment of Mr. Punshon and Dr. Johnson he improved steadily, the wrath of the latter, when he heard of his collaborator, doing the invalid, according to his own account, more good than medicine.

"I've done with you," said the doctor, fuming. "It's all over the town that Punshon has cured you when I failed. What do you mean by it?"

"I'm not cured yet," said the invalid, grimly. "Dear Brother Punshon has got to do a lot more for me before he has finished. I have an idea that I am going to be one of his most difficult cases."

"All this stuff about Christian Science——" began the doctor.

"It's nothing to do with Christian Science," retorted the other. "It's a little special brand of Punshon's own. He is far too conceited to adopt anybody else's ideas.

He also expressed his firm belief that their troubles would soon be over—one way or another

He is charged with electricity—a living magnet, that's the idea, and, in a lesser degree, he thinks he is able to magnetize his followers."

The doctor stood regarding him with a perplexed grin.

"What is the game?" he inquired, bluntly.

"Game?" repeated Mr. Key, loftily. "There is no 'game.' You don't understand. Magnetic healing is serious, most serious. So are the healers. If they could see a joke they wouldn't be healers. Punshon couldn't see a joke if I put it in front of his nose and burnt coloured lights round it."

"You might try," suggested the other.

"Get thee behind me, Satan," said Mr. Key, severely. "Besides, I'm going to. Meantime, you had better leave Punshon a free hand. I don't want you to get the credit of his cure. You don't want it either. If you go, and I have a relapse——"

The doctor nodded. "Nobody could expect me to halve a patient with Punshon," he murmured.

"Exactly," said the other, "but you needn't put it in quite such a surgical way. It's not nice. By the way——"

"Well?"

"What about one weak whisky-and-soda a day?" inquired Mr. Key, in persuasive accents.

The doctor stood for a time considering. "Better ask Punshon," he said at last, and faded slowly from the room.

A good man would have been moved by the tender gratitude displayed by Mrs. Key when she learnt that her husband had abandoned drugs entirely, in favour of spiritual treatment. The only effect on Mr. Key was to confirm him in his iniquities. His spirits rose and the hue of health returned to his cheeks. And he praised Mr. Punshon and his strange and beneficent power until that gentleman nearly fell a victim to the sin of pride.

"Walk across the room," he commanded.

Mr. Key obeyed.

"Your limbs are straight and supple," chanted the healer; "your body is strong; your soul is in command; you are healed."

"Thanks to you," breathed the admiring Mrs. Key.

"To-morrow you can go for a walk," continued Mr. Punshon to his patient. "My work is finished."

"Everybody knows what I've said about him."

Both husband and wife were certain as to his exact words. In fact, the excellent Mrs. Key repeated them to two or three friends the same day. And yet, just before midnight, she sat up in the small bed she occupied in the sick-room almost persuaded that she had heard a moan. Within the next minute five full-grown moans, muffled by the bedclothes, issued from the other bed.

"Aren't you well?" she inquired.

"Well?" repeated Mr. Key, bringing his head up and suppressing moan number six. "Yes, of course I am. Didn't Mr. Punshon say I was?"

In confirmation, he groaned three times and wound up with a faint shriek.

"What are you making that noise for, then?" inquired his wife, not unnaturally.

Mr. Key made no reply. It was evident by his lamentations that he wanted his breath for other purposes. His wife slipped on a dressing-gown and, lighting a candle, crossed over to him.

"What *is* the matter?" she said, in alarm.

"Don't mind me," said the invalid, with a groan that made the ornaments on the mantelpiece rattle. "Go to sleep."

His wife suppressed an obvious retort and stood regarding him anxiously.

"*O-o-o-o!*" said Mr. Key. "*A-a-a-h!*" He wiped his brow with the sleeve of his pyjamas and, uttering a faint sigh, was taken suddenly with a series of noises in the throat highly reminiscent of Mr. Punshon.

"I wish I could stop that," he said, fretfully. "I suppose it's Punshon's in-

fluence. Perhaps I'm too receptive. *O-oh!* my leg!"

Mrs. Key eyed him wistfully. "Which one?" she inquired.

"What the—what does that matter?" exclaimed the sufferer. "Now it's my shoulder. The *left* one," he added, bitterly. "Has Jane gone to bed?"

"Long ago," replied his wife, staring.

"I can't bear it," gasped the sufferer, wildly. "You'll have to tell her to get up and run for the doctor."

Mrs. Key clasped her hands. "Oh, Silvanus!" she cried, reproachfully.

"I can't help it," muttered her husband. "I'd rather have Punshon, of course, but I don't like to disturb him. He could stop it. As soon as he got his blessed paw—hands—on me, it would go."

"I'll ask him to come round in the morning," said Mrs. Key.

"I can't wait," moaned the sufferer. "I'm sorry, but you'll have to ask Jane to get up and go for the doctor. It isn't far."

His wife hesitated. "If you are no better in ten minutes," she said at last, "I'll go and ask Mr. Punshon to come."

Mr. Key protested, and for fully five minutes lay silent. At the end of that time he gave a very fine representation of a soul in torment.

"Better take Jane with you," he said, in a weak voice, as his wife began to dress.

"I can't leave you in the house alone," she murmured. "I'll wake her up and let her know I am going out. I sha'n't be long."

She hurried upstairs, and a minute or two later he heard the front door close.

"Poor thing," he murmured. "Poor thing. It is an infernal shame; but it's all for her own good."

He sat up in bed yawning, every now and then releasing a groan for the benefit of the listener upstairs. The time passed slowly, and a feeling of drowsiness almost overcame him. He hoped fervently that Punshon was as fond of sleep as he was.

He awoke with a start and sat up in bed, listening. A continuous knocking and ringing at the front door seemed to indicate that Mrs. Key had forgotten to take the key with her. It also proved that Jane could sleep as soundly at one in the morning as at seven-thirty.

With an idea that every little helped he added a few whines to the noise below, but in vain. The jangling of the bell was hideous, the knocking incessant. Then he heard, in addition, the boots of a heavy and possibly irritated man kicking the paint off his front door and voices of advice and instruction from his neighbour's bedroom window. He had just come to the conclusion that the

"Walk across the room" her commanded

maid had passed away in her sleep when he heard her door open and an apologetic whirlwind pass down the stairs.

Mr. Punshon entered the room in silence and, ignoring the faint smile with which the sufferer endeavoured to greet him, took a chair by the bedside and got to work with the air of a man who was going to crowd half an hour's work into a few minutes. Mr. Key sighed twice, and then his face resolved itself into an expression of ineffable peace.

"Magician!" he murmured.

Mr. Punshon grunted and bestowed a smile of conscious power upon the admiring Mrs. Key.

"It's wonderful," continued the sufferer. "Wonderful! I wonder what caused the relapse?"

Mr. Punshon started. "You must have been thinking wrong," he said, tartly.

"I can't remember doing so," said Mr. Key, in a diffident voice. "I have only been congratulating myself upon having the good sense to take your treatment. It has been a great joy to me. Great. I knew I was going to get better when I put myself into your hands. Else I shouldn't have done so."

The unconscious Mr. Punshon smiled again. "Faith helps," he admitted. "How do you feel now?"

Mr. Key looked into the red-rimmed, sleepy eyes peering into his, and hesitated.

"Almost free from pain," he said, at length. "There's just a tiny bit troubling me in the left knee-cap."

The healer diverted his gaze to a knob in the bedclothes, and concentrated upon it until the veins stood out on his forehead. An unusual amount of gurgling and choking testified to his absorption.

"Did I say 'left'?" inquired Mr. Key, as the other wiped his brow. "How stupid of me; I meant 'right.'"

He brought another knob into prominence and, patting it for Mr. Punshon's guidance, waited with calm confidence while the other swallowed a gurgle that threatened to choke him.

"I'm afraid Mr. Punshon is tired," said Mrs. Key.

"He never tires of good works," said her husband, reproachfully.

Mr. Punshon smiled wanly and, suppressing a yawn, continued his ministrations.

"I feel so selfish lying here snug and warm in bed and keeping you out of yours," said Mr. Key. "But perhaps you don't care much for sleep."

"Eight hours," said Mr. Punshon, somewhat shortly. "Always. Any pain in the knee now?"

Mr. Key shook his head. "It's gone," he said, in a hushed voice.

Mr. Punshon leaned back with a sigh, a noisy sigh, of relief.

"Into my left shoulder," continued the invalid, querulously.

Mr. Punshon got up with great suddenness and stood glowering at him. Mrs. Key, with her hands clasped, eyed them in silent dismay.

"Please don't trouble any more," said Mr. Key, gently. "I'm afraid it is a difficult case. Too difficult, perhaps. I ought not to have bothered you. I suppose Johnson would have pulled me round, in time."

He closed his eyes wearily and lay back listening in great content to an excited whispering between his wife and the healer. Then he heard the chair creak and felt a pair of clammy hands take his. For some time the stertorous breathing of Mr. Punshon was the only sound in the room. Then even that ceased and Mr. Key, opening his eyes to ascertain the reason, discovered to his indignation that the healer had gone. Daylight was coming in at the window, and it was only too clear that his victim had taken advantage of the sleep into which Mr. Key had fallen, to escape. A clock downstairs struck five. He groaned in spirit, but soon coming to the conclusion that that was no good, gave utterance to several fleshly ones. The other bed creaked.

"Do you want anything?" inquired Mrs. Key, sleepily.

"Where's Punshon?" demanded her husband, in an aggrieved voice.

"Why, he left hours ago," said Mrs. Key, sitting up. "He put you into a refreshing slumber and went."

"Fetch him back," said the invalid, briefly.

Mrs. Key's cry of consternation left him unmoved. Mr. Punshon had taken the case out of the doctor's hands by giving absent treatment in the first place, and, after that, had taken full charge. In a stern voice, broken by pain and marred by snufflings, Mr. Key ordered him to be fetched forthwith.

"I can't," said his wife, desperately.

"Well, will you please go and ask him whether he has any objection to my consulting Dr. Johnson?"

Mrs. Key went—but only after a long argument—to return an hour later with a ferocious and demoralized-looking Mr. Punshon, who, advancing reluctantly to the foot of the bed, stood there gobbling.

"Good of you!" murmured the invalid.

Mr. Punshon took not the slightest notice.

"I do hope this pain will soon go," continued Mr. Key. "I don't want to fetch you out of your bed every night. I know you don't mind, still——"

Mr. Punshon stared at him and endeavoured—but in vain—to concentrate his mind upon healing.

"I suppose I can't have that walk you spoke of, to-day," said Mr. Key. "It's very disappointing. I was looking forward to it. I wanted to go round and tell people what mental healing had done for me. Some of them are so incredulous."

"You must have patience," said the healer. "Fifty years of wrong living——"

"Forty-three," murmured the invalid. "And I feel younger since you have been treating me. It almost seems as though your healthy, virile spirit has become part of myself. I feel different. A better man. I think differently. I—I breathe differently. How is Mrs. Punshon?"

"She is quite well, thank you," said the healer, with some surprise.

Mr. Key half closed his eyes and a seraphic smile played around his lips. "I dream of her," he said, softly.

"*Dream!* Dream of her? Dream of *my wife?*" stuttered the outraged husband, in tones that nearly drowned the exclamation of the startled Mrs. Key.

Mr. Key nodded. "Ever since you started treating me," he replied. "It's very curious. I suppose your powerful mind has overcome mine and your thoughts have become my thoughts. Have any of your other patients——?"

"No, sir," interrupted the other, with violence.

Mr. Key sighed. "It's very curious," he repeated. "And since this treatment started I have had an almost irresistible craving for whisky. Do you——"

"I'm a life-long teetotaller," said the glaring Mr. Punshon.

He stood breathing noisily for a few seconds and then, with a violent gesture, turned and walked towards the door.

"Aren't you going to give me treatment?" inquired Mr. Key, in a surprised voice.

Mr. Punshon made no reply, but the slamming of the front door spoke volumes. Mr. Key turned and eyed his wife.

"He has given the case up," he said, shaking his head. "After breakfast you must send Jane round for the doctor. I can't go on like this."

diverted his gaze to a knob in the bedclothes & concentrated upon it until the veins stood out on his forehead

HE saw the doctor a few hours later, and after a lengthy explanation—with Mrs. Key holding a watching brief for the absent Mr. Punshon—requested him to treat him for the old complaint plus incipient adenoids, a nasty trick of biting his finger-nails, a lamentable craving for whisky, and a few other matters.

"I am sorry you spoke so freely," said Mrs. Key, after the doctor had gone. "He might talk."

"That's all right," said her husband, darkly. "He never repeats anything his patients would mind."

HOW TO BECOME FIRST-CLASS AT TENNIS

By some of those who have done it

ILLUSTRATED BY H. F. CROWTHER SMITH.

THE lawn-tennis players of England can be roughly divided into two classes—the first-class exponents of the game and—the others. Between these two classes there is apparently a great gulf fixed, and few there be that pass over it. This is a generally admitted fact, but the thing that worries the ordinary player of the game and its followers is just how the "cracks" became "cracks." Thousands of men and women of all ages are playing in tournaments throughout this country day after day during eight months of the year, while an even larger number patronize the clubs—great and small—in the long summer evenings, and yet the percentage of these folk who reach even good club form is extraordinarily small. Whole seasons pass without one new-comer to the first-class ranks. What is the secret of our great ones' success, and, more interesting still, what steps did they take to achieve it? As this matter has always been somewhat of a mystery even to a large section of the very intelligent class of athletes of both sexes who play lawn tennis, THE STRAND MAGAZINE has asked a number of well-known players in the top class to say in a few words just exactly how they became first-class and the efforts they made to achieve this end.

Not only have these folk thrown much light on a hitherto very dark subject in games, but they clearly demonstrate on what lines the ambitious reader, thirsting for fame at lawn tennis, should go about this difficult task. The biographical details given by some of the contributors to our symposium have a special interest of their own. The following "prescriptions" for success at lawn tennis come from players of all ages and schools.

PAT WHEATLEY

(The present Covered Courts Champion of England).

I attribute any advancement I may have made in lawn tennis to the fact that I have been fortunate enough to play against some of the finest players in the world and thus had a unique opportunity for watching and studying their methods. I certainly started my lawn tennis in South Africa, the country of my birth, but it was really in England, the home of lawn tennis, that I gained my experience and first realized what an enormous amount there was in the game.

The coaching I received from Charles Lockyer, the professional at the Dulwich Covered Courts, undoubtedly helped me to improve my game considerably. This coach was, for instance, the first man to advise me to take the ball at the top of its bound and to stand inside the base-line when receiving the service. The same advice was given me by some of the leading English players, but because I could not fall into the knack of quickening up my game immediately, I went back to my original and slower methods instead of persevering. When, however, I played Jean Borotra, the great French player, in the London *versus* Paris match this spring, I realized that to stand any chance against players of this calibre I should have to change my methods.

I then started practising hard to quicken up my game, with the result that I have now much more confidence in my ground strokes and return of service than I had before.

Here is a little "wrinkle." A large number of players apparently do not believe in practising against a wall, but personally I have found this scheme very helpful. I practically learnt to half-volley through wall practice. I used to try to imagine that I was playing against an opponent by advancing up to the wall on a drive, half-volleying the first return, and then indulging in a quick bout of close volleying—with the wall, of course. If there is some particular ground shot one wants to cultivate, I always think it is useful to practise it against a wall before trying it on the court even in ordinary practice games.

A. D. PREBBLE

(The well-known International Doubles Player).

I think the will to improve and not necessarily to win has had a lot to do with any success which may have attended my efforts on a lawn-tennis court. The incentive to improve came to me early in life. In my seventh year I remember spending several hours one sunny day marking out our court at home (with a brush) so that it should be worthy of a visit from a cousin whom I thought then to be the best player in the world. From that very day the desire to play the game to the best of my ability sprang up within my heart. For a time, of course, cricket came first—until I left school—but on starting business I took up lawn tennis very seriously and joined a club where all the players (men) were considered very good. An ambition to win the club championship was my first step, and when this was achieved I joined a still better club with the further hope of being chosen for my county's team—at doubles.

After reaching a standard of play which we will call good club doubles, I found great difficulty in improving, and therefore spent a lot of my spare time watching first-class players and endeavouring to incorporate in my game those shots in which I was lacking. For example, I learnt how to execute a placed "kill" from the late R. F. Doherty, low volleying from Roper Barrett, lob-volleying from G. M. Simond, and the half-volley from G. A. Caridia. The next step, of course, was to adopt the strokes I had acquired, when playing in matches. For instance, if my opponents could, and did, hit harder than I could, there was no object in my trying to outdrive them, but to use their force in returning the ball with well-placed short volleys; and *vice versâ*, if my opponents were good volleyers it was naturally my endeavour to make them play ground shots. In my opinion it all, in fact, amounts to this—learn all the strokes you possibly can and then use your brains as to which are the best ones to employ against the various folk you play.

PAT WHEATLEY.

C. P. DIXON

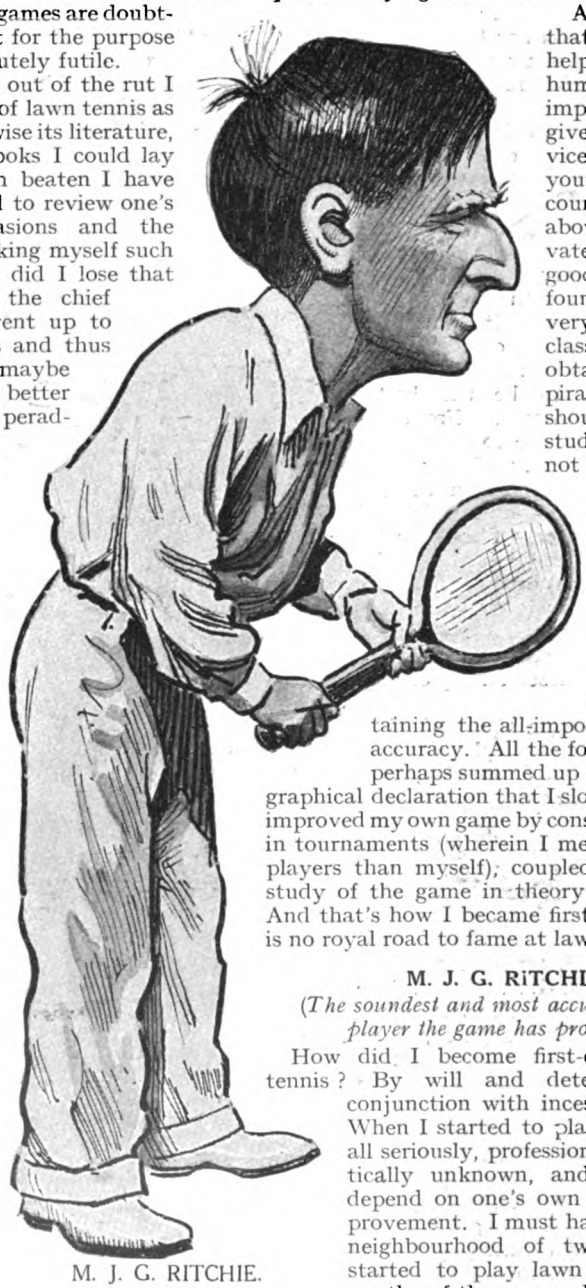
(The Davis Cup International and a great stylist).

In my "climb" from a third-rater to a first-class player I think I made most improvement through entering the open singles at the big tournaments, although I had no chance then, of course, of reaching the final stages of these competitions. What I did get, however, was constant practice against players better than myself. This naturally strengthened my game quite a lot, and one could clearly observe slight advances by the much better fights I put up when I met a well-known player for the second or third time who at our first meeting had wiped the court with me. Of course, the mere watching of first-class players in court is a great aid to improving one's own game, but it is infinitely better from this point of view to play against them. May I at this point draw attention to a grievous error so many promising players seem to make? They join a fairly good club and then week after week play the same player (an intimate friend, probably) on about the same mark very likely.

The consequence is that their game becomes dreadfully stereotyped, and the pair often thereby acquire bad faults which are very hard to eradicate later on. As a means of exercise these friendly games are doubtless very good fun, but for the purpose of improvement absolutely futile.

In my efforts to get out of the rut I also studied the game of lawn tennis as closely as I could, likewise its literature, especially any text-books I could lay my hands on. When beaten I have always found it useful to review one's game on such occasions and the methods employed, asking myself such questions as: "Why did I lose that match? What were the chief causes? Perhaps I went up to the net on short balls and thus asked for trouble, or maybe my opponent kept a better length in driving, or peradventure he hit harder than I did. Perhaps the other man had a superior service, or then, again, it may have been a really hard battle in which my antagonist stayed the course better than I did, condition gaining the mastery. Whatever it was, I must try to remedy my defects the next time I go into court."

The study of tactics was a great factor in my advancement, for tactics play a very important part in the game. If, for instance, my opponent has any weaknesses, I must discover them and profit by that knowledge. On the other hand, I must try to bring my game up to a uniform level of excellence, strengthening any unsoundness there may be, say, on the backhand or on the volley—two usually uncertain strokes in one's early days on the courts. All this, of course, means constant practice and sometimes simply concentrating on one stroke for hours at a time. In this direction knocking up on a wall whereon is drawn a line at the height of the net is not at all bad practice, as many well-known players will tell you. There is plenty of good training for the eye, too, to be obtained by quick volleying with a friend at the net.



M. J. G. RITCHIE.

At least, I found that all these things helped me in my humble efforts to improve. May I give a little advice to ambitious young players by counselling them above all to cultivate accuracy? A good drive I have found to be the very basis of first-class play, and to obtain this the aspirant to honours should first of all study length. Do not hit too hard at first, but as you gain confidence and accuracy, then you can put force and power behind your drives, still, of course, retaining the all-important factor of accuracy. All the foregoing can be perhaps summed up by an autobiographical declaration that I slowly but surely improved my own game by constantly playing in tournaments (wherein I met many better players than myself), coupled with a close study of the game in theory and practice. And that's how I became first-class. There is no royal road to fame at lawn tennis.

M. J. G. RITCHIE

(The soundest and most accurate singles player the game has produced).

How did I become first-class at lawn tennis? By will and determination in conjunction with incessant practice. When I started to play the game at all seriously, professionals were practically unknown, and one had to depend on one's own efforts for improvement. I must have been in the neighbourhood of twenty when I started to play lawn tennis at all worthy of the name. It was by joining the South Norwood Club, where they had a large number of courts, that I obtained plenty of practice against players far better than myself—an important factor in my improvement. There was, by the way, a

"ladder," or order of merit, at this club on which the twenty best players were tabulated according to their proved skill, and in connection with which challenges for places were allowed. I started from the bottom of this ladder and gradually worked my way up. Eventually I managed to get amongst the first half-dozen, and was then available for club matches, thus getting further opportunity to obtain that all-important commodity experience. It was about this time that I furtively entered for a tournament or two, not with too much success at first, but I did not in the least mind being beaten. Indeed, these second-class handicaps gave me further useful practice in the spadework of the game, so that by slow degrees I improved into a sound and steady player. The first occasion on which I was promoted to the first-class handicaps (at Beckenham many years ago, when I received 15/3 or thereabouts) was quite a gala day in my career, and I never looked back afterwards.

Having got over the drudgery of the game, if one may use such a phrase in this connection, I definitely turned the corner, improvement was rapid, and it took me a comparatively short time to get down to scratch. To improve "behind scratch" became, of course, harder and harder, and it was still incessant practice and tournament play which enabled me to improve my position in the lawn-tennis world.

By the time I had finished with handicap play, my handicap was down to something like owe 40, but in the meantime I had, of course, often entered for open singles, which give more scope for opening one's shoulders when trying to play a better class of game. This was why I threw up handicaps, and for years past now (except occasionally for practice) I have not played in them. The tactics required in such events do not improve a player's game one bit after a certain stage has been reached. I have gone into these personal details solely because I think this is the most informative way to explain my rise to the first-class ranks. No doubt a good many of the players who reach the very top class have certain natural gifts to start with, but these must be cultivated with great concentration. If I were asked to state in a few words what is the real difference between first-class players and non-first-class players, I should say accuracy and pace. These two assets, providing one has a reasonable eye, fleetness of foot, and a proper swing of the racket, can undoubtedly be acquired along the lines that I have laid down in the "confessions" which appear above.

H. ROPER BARRETT

(Our greatest tactician).

With great humility I admit the charge of being—at one time, at least—a first-class lawn-tennis player, a stage of proficiency which was reached solely by assiduous practice. Night after night for a period of not less than two hours I used to practise at the old Forest Gate L.T.C. with the avowed object of improving my game. My first efforts were directed to "finding" the base-line from any position and under any circumstances by lobbing—nothing less. I even lobbed the return of the service, and, as players were not so good overhead then as they are to-day, it usually paid by reason of the fact that my opponents became unsteady or lost their tempers, or both. I won the singles handicap at Felixstowe from scratch in 1892 (thirty-one years ago this August), beating S. H. Hughes in the final, by persistent lobbing—he was annoyed.

I am still a great believer in accuracy—a magnificent return from an almost impossible position brings down the gallery, but it only increases your score by one point. "Steady does it" is a policy I have always advocated, and endeavoured to carry out myself even unto the present day.

In my lawn-tennis youth I was very keen on handicaps, but I never got much of a start, having invariably to concede a long one. Hence one could not afford to give away a single point, and the effort to avoid mistakes, in the course of time, made one so sure that with a fair amount of luck I could usually manage to put the ball precisely where I wanted to, within reason. It was constant practice and plenty of good club play that helped me to attain whatever success I have won. A big incentive in my early days were the "place" lists at the various clubs, and to get ranked amongst the first six players of their own club was the Alpha and Omega of most young players of my time.

A few words of advice to those about to endeavour to be first-class players may not perhaps come amiss.

Keep yourself fit—it is not the funny man at two o'clock in the morning who wins the open singles!

Unless you are a genius like S. H. Smith was, do not cultivate a pet shot—it is all-round soundness that tells in the long run. It is so disconcerting to your opponent to find that you have no outstanding weakness at which to hammer. One or two "musts" and I have done:—

You must have constant practice.
You must keep fit.
You must be steady at critical moments.
You must not lose your temper.

Above all, you must always *play* at the game, not *work* at it.

COLONEL A. R. F. KINGSCOTE, M.C.

(England's most classic player).

I am doubtful if there is any rule for bridging the gulf. Concentration, keenness, energy, determination, and practice are essentials, but these are really no good—beyond a certain point—unless one has the instinct for ball games and the opportunitv to play when you are young.

For my own part, I was fortunate in being able to play a great deal when I was young. Starting at the age of eleven I had more or less continuous play until I was about eighteen, and was, moreover, fortunate in having some instinct for ball games and likewise to find some very nice people to play with me and help me. These advantages, perhaps, coupled with great keenness for the game and a certain amount of determination, served me in good stead.

J. B. GILBERT.

J. B. GILBERT

(Finalist World's Covered Title 1923).

It is somewhat difficult, I find, to give an adequate answer when one is asked that always difficult question, "To what do you attribute your success in the lawn-tennis world?" I think in my own case it is due rather to a series of circumstances and perhaps an element of luck than to any particular scheme or system. Perhaps the object of this symposium would be best served so far as I am concerned if I gave a short outline of my lawn-tennis career. I started playing lawn tennis at the age of ten, and in about five or six years I had improved enough to beat most, if not all, of the members of the small club to which I belonged. It was then I made a very grave mistake. Instead of joining a better club right away I continued to play at the same little one almost continuously until 1913, with my handicap nevertheless going steadily back and back. In 1913 I went to Germany on business and was "detained" there very much longer than I intended. Other players were in a similar plight, and to make the best of a bad job we managed to get together a sufficient amount of apparatus and materials to make a few sand courts, and it was during this "detention" in the Fatherland that I realized the necessity of playing against people very much better than myself if I was to improve my game. On my return to England in 1919 I determined to play in as many tournaments as possible, but without much success so far as that particular season was concerned. The outlook brightened in 1920, however, when I was greatly encouraged by a triple success at Sandown, Isle of Wight (not Park), and it was on the strength of this that I entered for the championships at Wimbledon in 1921. It was at this international meeting that I really got my foot inside "the charmed circle," as the first-class tennis community has been called. I drew Roper Barrett in the first round, and although beaten by, I think, 3 sets to 1, I learnt a lot about tactics from this great player. Being beaten in the first round I naturally entered for the All England Plate (a sort of consolation event for those who come out of the championship in its very early stages), and after a series of very instructive and valuable (to me) matches I managed to defeat F. M. B. Fisher in the final. No doubt all this experience improved my game a lot, for shortly afterwards I had the surprise of my life when I received a wire from the Lawn Tennis Association asking if I could go to America with the Davis Cup team which was shortly to set sail. The luck of these things is apparent. Had I survived the first two rounds of the above-mentioned

Wimbledon, and so been ineligible for the Plate, I might never have worked up my game in the presence of the selectors. The point is that, although I did not actually play in the Davis Cup matches of the 1921 American tour, the experience I gained there and the encouragement derived from merely being chosen to go overseas did much to improve my game. And all this means in substance that, given a certain amount of ability and the right temperament—this is very important—encouragement will do a lot in helping one to become first-class. The confidence gained is alone worth fifteen. To the reader who is anxious for a little advice on his road to Wimbledon and "the charmed circle" I would proffer the following:—

Never continue to play at a club where there is no one capable of beating you.

Until some better system is introduced play in as many of the really good tournaments as possible, but do not enter for every event. At the start concentrate mainly on singles, and when you have had a few successes and your handicap is on the downward grade, say somewhere between 4/6 and scratch, cut out the handicap singles and enter for another open event. It is sometimes a good plan, however, to enter for both singles, and then, if you see no chance of getting through more than say two rounds in the opens, make a big effort to win the handicap event. You must use your own judgment in matters of this kind, of course, but my own experience has taught me that, although giving starts in a handicap may steady one's game, it does not develop it, and that after all is what I am here trying to give some advice about. These minute details may not seem very important to the general reader, but young and ambitious players will find them not unhelpful, I fancy.

W. C. CRAWLEY.

W. C. CRAWLEY

(*England's leading stroke player*).

It is very difficult to say just how one became first-class at lawn tennis, but apart from the obvious things I should say that in my case, after I had acquired the strokes, the thing that enabled me, so to speak, to rise above the general run of player was a careful study of the methods of the greatest players and an attempt to analyse why they did certain things, following this with an attempt to reproduce what they did. This enabled me at the early age of twenty-three to rise from the rec. 4/6 mark to owe 15/3 in one season. As a matter of fact I only played in six tournaments that season, although I got a lot of play at Oxford, of course, against the many good players who came down to play against the 'Varsity.

I am convinced that those of our young players who at the moment have as good strokes as anyone, and yet who cannot "put together a game," would benefit very greatly by a close analysis of the methods of eminent players. Even imitation without an intelligent appreciation of the why and wherefore will often lead to good results.

"US BUILDERS—"

by

A. NEIL LYONS

THE New Gentleman had strolled across his neat little park to the old farmhouse which was destined for the occupation of his new bailiff. As compared with the generality of New Gentlemen, this one was rather shy and modest. He seemed to be conscious of his newness. He was wearing a new grey suit with voluminous nether garments, of the kind which are currently called "Plus Fours." He seemed to be conscious of the newness of these.

Arrived at the old farmhouse, the New Gentleman found himself confronted by a massive old nail-studded, oaken door. He tapped at this apologetically, with a reticent knuckle, and the door was opened by a young woman. She was an alert young woman, wearing workaday clothes, a quiet hat, an apron, freckles, and a new wedding ring. She greeted the New Gentleman respectfully.

"Good morning, Mrs. Rudd," said this individual. "Has Mr. Dunkerton come yet?"

"Upstairs, sir," replied the young woman. "I'll call he." She opened a door in the wall of the great farmhouse kitchen, and clattered up a flight of naked oaken stairs.

The New Gentleman entered the room and looked shyly about him. He looked at the typical kitchen, or living room, of an old Sussex farmhouse. Its floor was flagged with great squares of mottled stone —winkle stone or "Sussex marble," they call it. There was a large open fire-place, replete with tall andirons, a moulded fireback, and heavy old angle-hooks. A dresser of carved and moulded oak, aged to the colour of grey stone, was built into the wall. The room was otherwise devoid of furniture, save for an empty, upturned packing-case, on which the New Gentleman seated himself. He looked through the leaded windows, set in grey oak mullions, at a chequered picture of orchard and walled garden. He looked up at the massive beams and rafters above his head, and he sighed contentedly.

Then a heavy foot was heard upon the stairway, and a moment later the middle-aged, protuberant, respectable figure of Mr. Dunkerton stood before him.

MR. DUNKERTON is a country builder, a little larger than full life size. He wears an old brown suit and a double-breasted green waistcoat on which a number of Masonic emblems in precious metal are displayed. He wears also a horseshoe moustache, duplicate chins, and a very small and rather battered "bowler" hat, which he now tilted from the right to the left side of his head in token of salutation to the New Gentleman. He carried a measuring rod and a pattern book of wall-papers.

"Went up to look at the old nursery, sir," Mr. Dunkerton remarked. "Bein' as I'm about, I thought I might as well paint that. Save me comin' round next year."

Young Mrs. Rudd blushed prettily. "You looks some time ahead, Mr. Dunkerton," she said.

"Ah!" responded the other; "us builders *got* to look ahead."

The New Gentleman looked nervously about him. "Have you and Mrs. Rudd agreed about the alterations here?" he asked.

"Well, sir, nor *exackly*," replied the builder. "We hareunt exackly had the time as yet, sir. You come upon us rather beforehand, sir, if you onerstand moi meanin'. We got so far, however, as Mrs. Rudd agreein' to leave the details of the job in moi hands."

"It's a sure thing," interposed Mrs. Rudd, "as anyone can trust Mr. Dunkerton to do what's right."

"That they can, Mrs. Rudd," assented the builder. "Whatever else they say about Joe Dunkerton," he added, with an air of jovial detachment, "I don't hear 'em say as he can't manage a building job."

"No," said Mrs. Rudd. "And there's

one thing about it: this bean't the *first* old house you've pulled about."

"Nor the hundredth. Why, there's hardly a door or window-pane in this parish as can't show the work of Joe Dunkerton. Dunkerton Blue they calls it."

The New Gentleman, on his upturned box, fidgeted about uncomfortably.

"*Blue?*" he exclaimed.

"R! Blue!" repeated the builder. "Dunkerton's Electric Blue. Seems to me as this place could do with a touch-up. Too much old oak about."

The New Gentleman remarked that, speaking for himself, he was not bitterly hostile to old oak.

The young woman remarked that Rudd had expressed a similar sentiment. "Not," she added, hastily, "as Rudd would want to interfere. It wouldn't pay him to."

"Oh, as to that," said Mr. Dunkerton, indulgently, "nobody don't begrudge the oak as sich. Oak as sich is all right in its place. 'Tis the *colour* us builders can't abide. Too mousy. If anybody want to be up to date, they won't beat Dunkerton's Electric Blue."

Mrs. Rudd smiled appreciatively. "Shouldn't wonder," she said, eyeing the grey oak dresser with evident disfavour, "if we can't make something o' *that* old object, time you've blued it."

"Never fear!" cried Mr. Dunkerton. "If yure master'll spare the pennies, *I'll* spend the paint."

The New Gentleman made a reassuring gesture. "Mrs. Rudd," he said, "is to have whatever decorations appeal to her—and to her husband."

"Thank you, sir." Mrs. Rudd curtsied.

"But as to Rudd," she remarked, "I'm sure as he don't care particular neether way. Wouldn't pay him to. There's one thing, sir, I would wish to ask for, and that's some up-to-date improvements in this old chimbly-place. I can't *abide* these here down fires."

"*We'll* blot out that—never fear!" exclaimed Mr. Dunkerton, gazing malevolently at the fire-place.

"Isn't it rather a fine old fire-place?" suggested the New Gentleman. "So simple and impressive. Better than any we have at the Hall."

"But your lady burns wood, sir."

"Of course. Why not?"

"Well, you see, sir," said Mrs. Rudd, "I've been brought *up* to wood and can't abide it. Too old-fashioned. I tell Rudd he've got to buy me *coal*."

"What's wanted here is a Number Nine Luxurior. Green tiles. Bright steel fittings. Yeller hearth. That'll give *style* to the room."

THE New Gentleman did not attempt to challenge this *ex-cathedra* statement from Mr. Dunkerton. He rose wearily from his box and looked dejectedly about him. Then he turned to Mr. Dunkerton and said: "What about those wall-papers? I don't personally care for patterned papers in an old house like this, but if Mrs. Rudd insists——"

"'Taren't for me to *insist*, sir," interjected Mrs. Rudd. "But I will say as a bit o' colour here an' there about a place ain't no detriment to anybody's spirits."

Mr. Dunkerton was hastily thumbing his pattern book. At last he held up, with evident pride, a sheet exhibiting bright red blobs on a yellow ground. "There you are, sir: Cromwellian Clover! I put that up in our late rector's study on'y a week afore he died!"

The New Gentleman did not care for Cromwellian Clover, nor for Japanese Geranium either. He took the sample book from Mr. Dunkerton's reluctant hand and fluttered the leaves himself until, at last, he lighted upon a plain grey paper for which he expressed a liking.

"Ninepence!" said Mr. Dunkerton. "Ninepence. You saves a shilling or more on the piece, but then you gets no pattern. 'Tis the pattern as costez the money. This here is what *I* calls a mourning paper. You leave the papering to me—and Mrs. Rudd—sir. I'm sure we shall turn out something satisfactory."

"Very well. Is that all to-day?"

"If you please, sir," remarked Mrs. Rudd, "there is one more favour I should wish, sir. There's too many doors about this room, or so I seem to think, and Mr. Dunkerton he agrees with me. I should like to do away with that door there, sir." She indicated a small oak door which gave access to the walled garden and the orchard.

"How do you mean—do *away* with it?" demanded the New Gentleman.

Mr. Dunkerton interposed. "Put a window in place of it, that's what we mean, sir. A stained-glass window. 'Tain't stained glass, *really*; 'tis paper, really. But that's got up to look wonderful *like* stained glass. There's three standard patterns, and you can take your choice of eether."

"What are the three patterns?"

Mr. Dunkerton licked his lips. "There's 'George an' the Dragon,'" he said, "and there's 'Moses in the Bulrushes,' and there's 'Lord Nelson kissing Hardy.' All mottoed complete."

"What do you think of it, sir?" Mrs. Rudd spoke eagerly, eyeing the New Gentleman with an expectant flush.

"Oh!" said the New Gentleman, walking hastily to the door. "Shove old Moses in by all means. He'll match the rest of it."

The New Gentleman walked dejectedly homewards, across his neat little park. But the dejection of that moment was nothing when compared with the dejection which afflicted him three weeks later, when he came to view the finished work of Mr. Dunkerton.

Mrs. Rudd, who received the New Gentleman, apologized for the absence of Rudd. "I don't know what he means, sir," complained Mrs. Rudd, "but he says as he haven't the nerve to face you. It won't pay him to goo on like that!"

The New Gentleman gazed round upon a blinding vision of Reckitt's Blue, adorning the doors, the window frames, the old oak dresser, the old oak beams, and even the floor, where an unusually electric piece of oilcloth had been instated.

The Number Nine Luxurior grate, with its green and yellow tiles, its shiny fittings, and its blue enamelled overmantel, grinned at him from that place which had been a fire-place.

The whole scene, nauseous by nature, was rendered additionally nauseating by the bilious light, compounded of orange and purple rays, which percolated through the new "stained" glass and flooded the floor with actinic dregs.

Something unexpected about this stained glass attracted the New Gentleman's eye. The colours were bad, as he had expected them to be, but the subject which they illustrated was inexplicit, confused. This the New Gentleman had *not* expected, and he called upon Mr. Dunkerton for an

"What you see on that window is a little fakement of my own: 'Moses kissing Hardy.'"

explanation. That individual, tilting his hat from left to right in token of respect, and whistling softly through his teeth, in token of pride in his accomplishments, stepped forward readily to oblige.

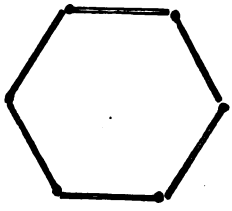
"You see, sir," said Mr. Dunkerton, "us builders has to contrive a makeshift at times. I found myself short of this here stained-glass paper, and so I had to contrive a makeshift between two separate papers. What you now see on that window is a little fakement of my own: 'Moses kissing Hardy.'"

"A most—er—engaging idea," stammered the New Gentleman.

"Well," said Mr. Dunkerton, swelling with pride and chins, and jingling with Masonic emblems, as he tilted his hat from right to left, "it ain't a everyday idea, at any rate."

PERPLEXITIES. By Henry E. Dudeney.

656.—THE SIX-SIDED FIGURE.



HERE are six matches arranged so as to form a regular hexagon. Can you take three more matches and so arrange the nine as to show another regular six-sided figure? No duplicated matches or loose ends allowed.

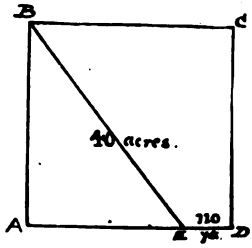
657.—A CRYPTIC SENTENCE.

G4E TXTXN B

CAN you, without difficulty, read this sentence?

658.—A RUNNING PUZZLE.

A B C D is a square field of 40 acres. The line B E is a straight path and E is 110 yards from D. In a race Adams runs direct from A to D, but Brown has to start from B, go from B to E and thence to D. Each keeps to a uniform speed throughout, and when Brown reaches E Adams is 30 yards ahead of him. Which wins the race, and by how much?



659.—AN EASY ENIGMA.

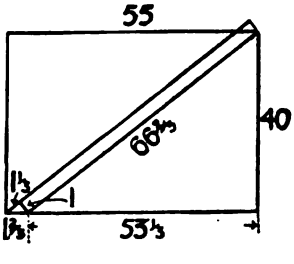
MY first two letters are a man, my first three a woman, my first four a brave man, and my whole a brave woman.

660.—CONCERNING A CUBE.

WHAT is the length in feet of the side of a cube when (1) the superficial area equals the cubical contents; (2) when the superficial area equals the square of the cubical contents; (3) when the square of the superficial area equals the cubical contents?

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

652.—THE GARDEN PATH.



THE area of the path is exactly 66⅔ square yards, which is clearly seen if you imagine the little triangular piece cut off at the bottom and removed to the top right-hand corner. Here is the proof. The area of the garden is 55 × 40 = 2,200. And (53⅓ × 40) + 66⅔ also equals 2,200. Finally, the sum of the squares of 53⅓ and 40 must equal the square of 66⅔, as it does. This will indicate the manner of solution to the young algebraist who has got as far as quadratic equations.

653.—WORD MULTIPLICATION

4128
3
12384

654.—A NEW MEASURING PUZZLE.

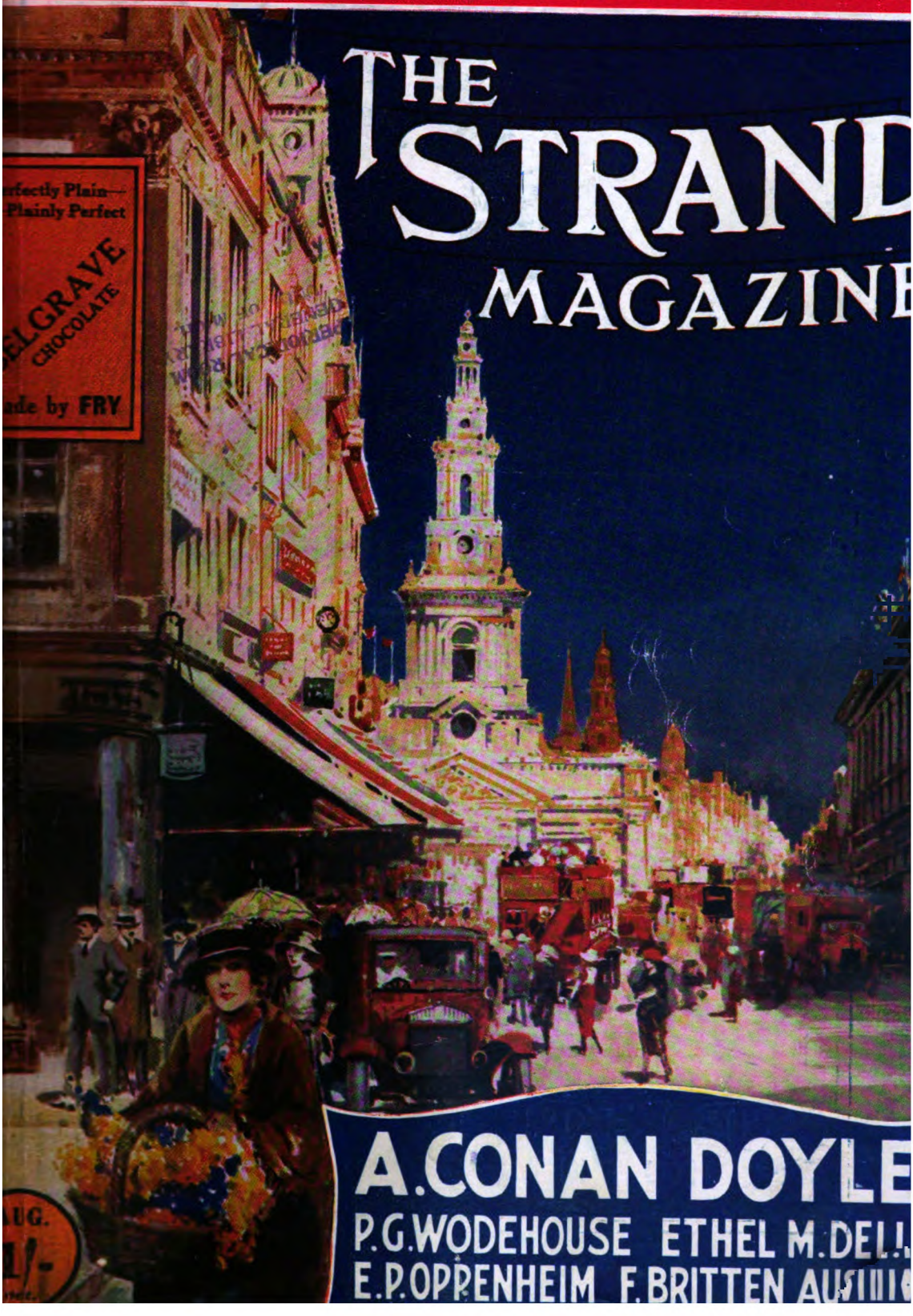
A 15	A 16			B 15	B 16		
0	16*	15	5*	*15	0	0	11
15	1*	0	5	0	15	15	11
0	1	5	0	15	15	*10	16
1	0	5	16	*14	16	10	0
1	16	15	6*	14	0	0	10
15	2*	0	6	0	14	15	10
0	2	6	0	15	14	*9	16
2	0	6	16	*13	16	9	0
2	16	15	7*	13	0	0	9
15	3*	0	7	0	13	15	9
0	3	7	0	15	13	*8	16
3	0	7	16	*12	16		
3	16	15	8*	12	0		
15	4*	0	8	0	12		
0	4	8	0	15	12		
4	0	8	16	*11	16		
4	16			11	0		

Every line shows a transaction. Thus, in column A, we first fill the 16 measure; then fill the 15 from the 16, leaving 1, if we want it; then empty the 15; then transfer the 1 from 16 to 15; and so on. The asterisks show how to measure successively 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. Or we can start, as in B column, by first filling the 15 and so measure in turn, 14, 13, 12, 11, etc. If we continue A we get B read upwards, or *vice versâ*. It will thus be seen that to measure from 1 up to 7 inclusive in the fewest transactions we must use the method A, but to get from 8 to 14 we must use method B. To measure 8 in the A direction will take 30 transactions, but in the B manner only 28, which is the correct answer. It is a surprising fact that with any two measures that are prime to each other (that have no common divisor, like 15 and 16) we can measure any whole number from 1 up to the largest measure. With measures 4 and 6 (each divisible by 2) we can only measure 2, 4, and 6. With 3 and 9 we could only measure 3, 6, and 9. In our tables the quantities measured come in regular numerical order, because the difference between 15 and 16 is 1. If I had given the measures 9 and 16, under A we should get the order 7, 14, 5, 12, 3, etc., a cyclical difference of 7 (since 16—9 = 7). After adding 7 to 14 we must deduct 16 to get 5, and after adding 7 to 12 we must deduct 16 to get 3, and so on.

655.—BEHEADING.

THE words are FOX—OX—X (equals 10)

HOLIDAY FICTION NUMBER



The Sweetest Link 'twixt Past and Present

When Grannie was a little girl she used to get, as a very big treat, home-made toffee made in a pan over the fire. How delicious it was!

Dame Sweet has now given Sir Kreemy Knut her special recipe for making home-made Toffee, and Sir Kreemy has had a great quantity made and supplied to the confectioners' shops.

This toffee, more delicious and more creamy than any that Grannie ever made, is called SHARP'S HOME-MADE SUPER-KREEM, and it is sold in pretty cottages. You must get one!

8d. per ¼lb.

Sold loose by weight or in 4-lb. decorated tins— also in 1/- and 1/6 tins.

SHARP'S ASSORTED SUPER-KREEM TOFFEE.

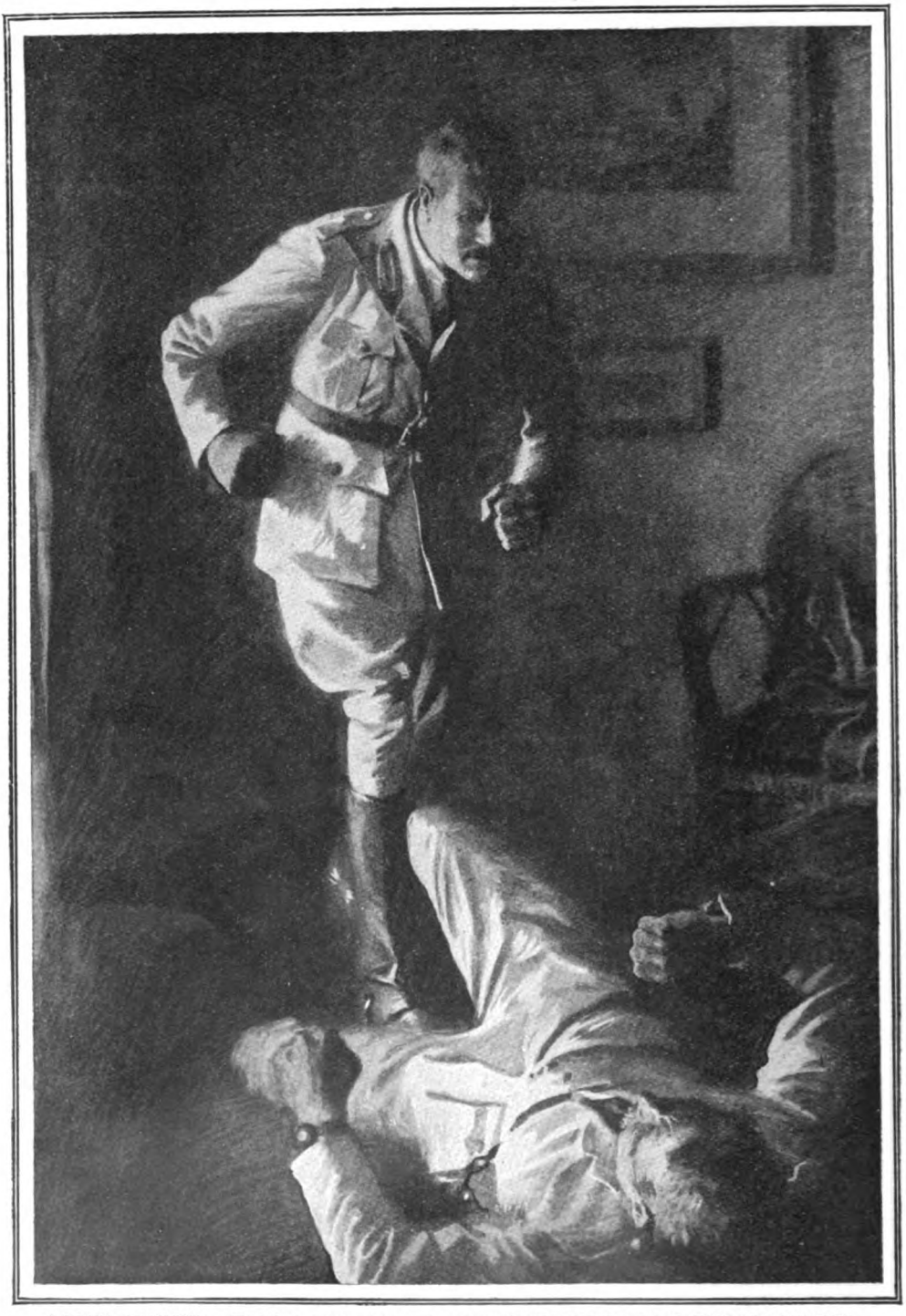
now consists of six varieties: Plain, Home-Made, Cocoanut, Chocolate, Coffee and Almond.

Look for the words "Sharp's Super-Kreem" on the paper wrapping round every piece.

E. SHARP & SONS, LTD., Maidstone.

SHARP'S SUPER-KREEM TOFFEE

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
August, 1923.



ROLFE RUSHED AT HIM AND MET A STRAIGHT LEFT FROM THE SHOULDER. HE WENT WITH A CRASH TO THE FLOOR.

(See page 117.)

AN AFFAIR OF HONOUR

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY A.C. MICHAEL

MAJOR BRUCE, G.S.O. (Intelligence), Headquarters Staff of the strategically-important Far Eastern base of Menangpore, was suddenly jerked out of the blissful Nirvana of his afternoon siesta to resumption of this temporarily-forgotten identity. The telephone bell was ringing. He slid off his couch, in shirt and breeches, and went to the instrument.

"Hallo!—Yes?" He listened. "Oh, hallo, Rolfe! What? General wants to see me? Right-o! I'll be along."

A minute or two later, girt once more in the official harness of Sam Browne over white tunic, his pith-helmet large over his deep-tanned, efficient-looking features, he emerged from the shutter-darkened cool of his bungalow into the blinding glare of a 4 p.m. sun. He turned along the white road, inadequately shaded between its rows of stiff-fronded palms, which led, beyond the bungalows of the married officers, to Garrison Headquarters. A couple of native soldiers, solemnly stupid with a hose-pipe, were getting gloriously wet as they changed its thick dust into mud that dried again behind them before they had moved on a dozen steps. He frowned. But it was not at the two soldiers that he frowned. Beyond them, at the gate of one of the more distant palm-embosked bungalows, a rickshaw stood in readiness, was at that moment being entered by a lady clad in white from open parasol to shoe-tip. For an instant his pace slackened like that of a man instinctively impelled to turn back on his tracks, then he reaffirmed its briskness.

He and the rickshaw now in movement drew near to one another, and although he gazed determinedly in another direction, he had—he knew not how—a glimpse of her face above the bobbing head of the runner. Another moment, and she was abreast of him, the runner immobile at her prettily-authoritative order.

"Frank!"

There was no help for it. Common courtesy exacted that he should stop, bring his hand up to his helmet in salute, school his voice to a polite ordinariness, conjure up some sort of smile.

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Fanshaw." His eyes rested unwillingly on her face, its fresh young beauty yet unwilted by this tropic furnace.

"Frank!" her voice was serious, "come here! I've been waiting for a chance of a word alone with you for three months—ever since we came out—and you seem to be the one person that I never meet except in a crowd."

"Yes?" he said, with a false innocence. He had seen to it, with a grim thoroughness, that they never should meet except in a crowd. "I've been pretty busy, you know."

Her eyes—such dear honest eyes they were!—caught his for a moment, looked into them.

"Frank!" she said, "I want—I've wanted all these three months—to—to ask you to forgive me. I treated you badly, very badly, I know." She hesitated, in the embarrassment of this avowal.

"That's all right," he muttered, looking

Copyright, 1923, by F. Britten Austin.

away from her. "The best man won, I suppose."

She flushed a little, stopped herself—he could guess as his glance came back to her—from saying, on a naive impulse, how much she and Dick were in love with one another. He did not need her to tell him. He had observed it from his distance on the edge of the crowd, with eyes that could translate, self-torturingly acute, every touch and gesture that passed between her and her husband.

She broke the awkwardness of the pause.

"We had no idea, Dick and I, when we married," she said, "that he would be sent to this station. He expected India."

"It's not your fault," he said, through his teeth. "It's just one of those little tricks that Fate plays upon people."

Her eyes went sympathetic.

"Perhaps Fate knows best," she said. "Frank—we've been pals ever since I was in short frocks—won't you be friends still?"

"Of course," he managed to say, uncomfortably. "Of course."

"You won't bear a grudge? You'll still be the best pal I ever had? Shake hands on it?" Their eyes met, looked into one another's, as she stretched out her hand to him. For one moment, as though he measured the gravity of what she asked of him, he looked into the candid beauty of her face, and then he reached up his hand to hers.

"I shake," he said, simply.

"And Dick?" she asked. "You'll be friends with him—real friends?"

He nodded.

"If he wants me to."

"No. Whether he wants you to or not. For my sake. I can't be happy if I feel that my one bit of home out here is hostile to him. You promise?" She was exercising her old authority over him, the old authority of her charm that two years ago—— He succumbed.

"All right," he said. "I promise. For your sake."

The sudden radiance of her face was—almost—full compensation.

"Thank you, Frank. That's all I want. You never broke your word in your life. You've made me so happy."

He saluted and the coolie sped off along the white road with her. Then he resumed his way. He took a deep chestful of the baking air, with incomplete relief, found himself quivering oddly. That first meeting, *tête-à-tête*, which he had so long dreaded, was over.

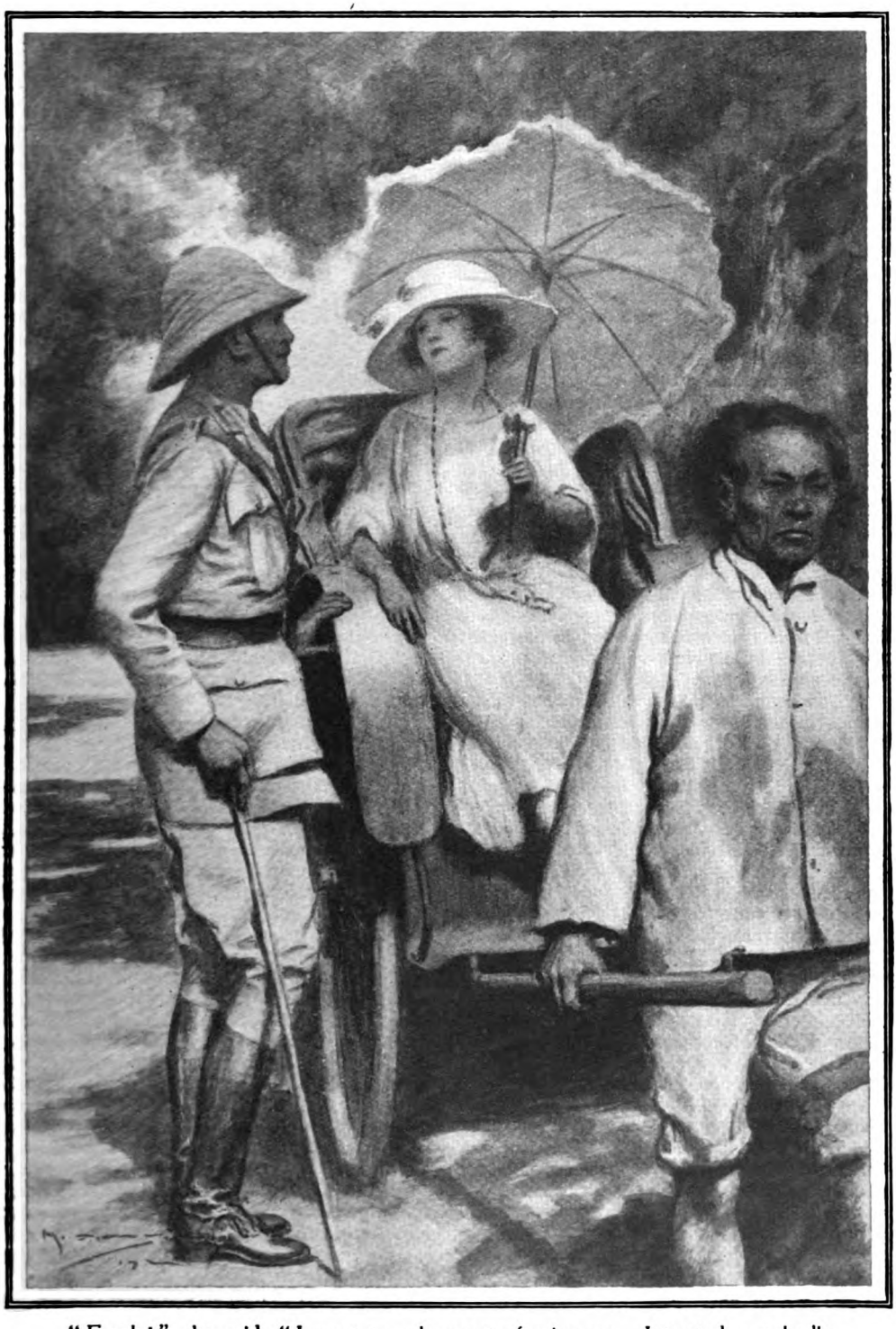
HE went along the road with his surroundings faded out of reality. He was back in the dusk of an English summer evening, he and she together within the clump of willows that drooped slim fingers to the trout-stream up which they had fished all day. He was trembling with the audacity of that utterance which all day he had been trying to phrase to himself with sufficient delicacy of approach, so freshly innocent of even suspecting it she seemed in her boylike comradeship—that utterance which at last had burst from him, surprising him by its spontaneity, its almost brutal directness.

"By God, Nina—I'm sorry if I offend you—but I love you!"

And she had looked at him, and said nothing—until after he had kissed her, caught tight in his arms. And then she had whispered.

Two years ago! He had left her behind, pledged to be his wife, a miracle of newly-perceived, almost awesome, womanhood, intoxicating in her happy beauty, in her incredible reciprocation of his love, that he could scarcely identify with the little girl he had seen grow up in interval to interval of leave from foreign service. He had come back to Menangpore to count off the days, to live through the three years—or it might be only two, if she came out to him—which he must endure until their marriage, endure with every fibre of his body craving for her, with his whole mind soaked in the thought of her. They wrote, of course, by every mail—until that mail, eight months ago, which had brought the letter which had stunned him, so that since he had never felt himself really and fully alive. She had made a mistake—it had been that he had always been such a dear good old pal—she had thought fondness was (she had knocked out that line without finishing it)—anyway, it was Major Fanshaw, home on leave from India, whom she was marrying, almost at once. He had seen an account of the ceremony in the *Times* a little later. And then, for a supreme and savage irony, the humorously-minded gods who whisper in the ears of the clerks of the A.G.'s Department at the War Office had sent Major Richard Fanshaw to join the Headquarters Staff, Menangpore. The same gods, nudging one another, had vetoed Major Francis Bruce's immediate application for a transfer.

Quite apart from this humiliating supersession, he did not greatly like Dick Fanshaw. In fact, no one in the Garrison greatly liked him. He had not the knack of sociability. He was a thin-faced, reserved sort of man, absorbed in his own thoughts, alleged to be studious, efficient at his job, but quite useless on the polo-field. It was a mystery beyond Bruce's comprehension how he and Nina had ever become intimate enough for even a proposal of marriage. Yet there



"Frank!" she said, "I want to ask you to forgive me. I treated you badly, very badly, I know."

was the fact—he had seen it with his own eyes—they were desperately, absorbedly, in love with one another.

Bah! He put the thing out of his mind. He'd promised Nina to be friendly with Fanshaw, and he'd do his best to be decent to him. If Fanshaw ever wanted a pal, he'd be handy—for Nina's sake.

He had arrived at the white-painted Garrison Headquarters, and, plunging into the comparative darkness of the building, went along the corridor to the door inscribed "G.O.C.," tapped, and entered. The General, pipe in mouth, was seated at his big desk, signing busily the papers which Rolfe, erect by his side, was presenting to him. Rolfe looked up at his appearance, nodded amicably, a discreet smile on his big pleasant face—good chap, Rolfe, the antithesis of Fanshaw, with a cheery word for everybody, a man who worked hard and played hard, even went the pace a little, despite his weight the most brilliant polo-forward in the Garrison; but the General, attending to one thing at a time as was his wont, continued to dash off one signature after another without a glance at him. Only when he had finished the last of the papers, which Rolfe now gathered into a sheaf and handed over to a waiting orderly, did he lift his head, acknowledge Bruce's prompt salute.

"Don't go, Rolfe," he said, as that officer went towards the door with the orderly. "I want you both. Sit down, Bruce."

THE orderly closed the door behind him, and there was a moment or two of silence as the General leaned back in his chair and refilled his pipe. Bruce contemplated the strong-jawed face with the iron-grey moustache, whose eyes narrowed themselves in a pause of meditation where he brought his thoughts to a focus while, deliberately, without hurry, he struck a match and surrounded himself with the smoke-cloud of the first few preliminary puffs. It was a familiar enough face to him. In his three years of Staff-Captain to General Sanderson's brigade in the old days in France, Bruce had learned to like as well as respect that grimly-efficient personality, which, though human enough off duty, would, when the occasion demanded, send men to certain death without a qualm, yet never without a precisely-achieved purpose that justified the sacrifice. Cunning as a fox he could be, too, as Fritz had more than once learned to his cost. The pause was at an end. The General's steel-grey eyes glanced comprehensively at his subordinates.

"Just see there's no one hanging round that door, Rolfe," he said, "and then sit down." His voice was serious. Rolfe obeyed, went to the door, returned to take a chair at the side of the General's desk opposite to Bruce. They waited for his next words. They came with a quiet deliberation, between puffs at his pipe. "Can either of you imagine how any unauthorized person could have got at Plan C?"

The two men jumped in their chairs.

"Good Lord, sir, you don't mean to say——" began Rolfe.

Bruce said nothing. He just gasped in the shock. Plan C—he had seen it, of course; the General had explained it to Hathaway, Fanshaw, Rolfe, and him before locking it away—Plan C contained the diagrams of the submarine-mine barrages which would protect this most important base in wartime, together with the combinations of cross-fire from the batteries now being erected. If the potential enemy had got hold of those plans——! Good God!—And only Hathaway, Fanshaw, Rolfe, and himself had been admitted to the secret of their existence. Hathaway was dead, carried off in half-a-dozen hours by fever. But where was Fanshaw? Surely Fanshaw ought to be here also——!

These thoughts went through him in a flash, were interrupted by the General's grim quiet voice.

"That's precisely what I do mean to say. Someone has got at Plan C—and, of course, copied it."

"But—are you sure, sir?" said Rolfe, excited and incredulous.

For answer, the General got up from his chair, went to the safe behind him, unlocked a heavy steel door with a key chained to his pocket, unlocked yet another door behind that, extracted from an inner drawer locked by yet another key a bulky envelope heavily sealed with red wax, brought it forward to them.

"This is a new envelope I sealed the other day," said the General. "Inside is the original." He tore it open, revealed another sealed envelope, ripped along one edge. "I cut it open myself when I found something was wrong. Now, gentlemen, our ingenious spy overlooked one little thing in his haste. Those seals are apparently quite all right. But when I put away that envelope it had a fine hair tied round it, passing through the centre of the sealing-wax. Is there any hair in that seal? There is not. Furthermore, the inner envelope was likewise tied round with a hair, and"—he extracted it—"you can see for yourselves that that hair has likewise disappeared. And for a final proof——" He pulled out several sheets of thin blue paper marked with curved masses of little black crosses and long straight lines that radiated out from various points along a

charted-out coastline, held it up to the light. "Do you see?" Close up to the edge in each corner was a minute pin-hole where the sheet had been fastened out flat, presumably to be photographed. "Each sheet has those same little pin-holes. I think that is sufficient evidence." He put back the plans in their envelopes, locked them again in the safe, turned to Bruce.

"Well, what have you to say to that?" he asked, with a grim smile.

"It knocks me over, sir," replied Bruce, "and it makes me feel somehow it's my fault. It's up to me to prevent that kind of thing."

"Precisely," agreed the General. "That's why I sent for you. You can't suggest any possible person?"

"No, sir. No one has any key to that safe but you."

The General nodded.

"Quite. But someone has got at my keys somehow—a whiff of a drug while I was asleep might have done it—these native thieves can get in anywhere—and taken an impression of them. There was that fellow you shot trying to break into your bedroom three or four nights ago, Rolfe, you remember?"

"The brute!" said Rolfe. "I just caught him slipping in through the window like a shadow."

"That's the kind of thing," said the General. "But observe! Only Plan C has been interfered with, and an ordinary native thief would certainly have helped himself to the considerable amount of cash which was much more in evidence than the plans in the inner drawer. It is wildly improbable that any native could have distinguished one document from another, impossible that he should have picked on Plan C, copied it, and sealed it up again with the office seal. Whoever it was that got hold of my keys, he was only a subordinate agent, *employed by someone who knew that Plan C was in that safe.* And, apart from myself," the General's probing eyes rested on both of them successively, "only four men were aware of that fact."

"It couldn't have been Hathaway," murmured Rolfe.

"It could not," said the General. "Hathaway died six weeks ago. One of my little habits is to examine those envelopes every day. That envelope was interfered with just three weeks back."

"Three weeks!" exclaimed Bruce.

"Three weeks," repeated the General. "I've been poaching on your preserves, Bruce—trying to do a little intelligence work in the meantime."

HE had now seated himself again and relit his pipe, looking at them over the flame of the match. Bruce and Rolfe glanced at each other in uncomfortable embarrassment.

"Don't you think, sir," said Bruce, "that Fanshaw ought to be here too——?"

"I did not invite Fanshaw," replied the General—"*purposely.*"

"Good God!" The exclamation broke from Bruce in spontaneous horror. "Surely, sir, you don't think——?"

"Why—it might just as likely be either of us!" said Rolfe.

The General carefully put down his match in the ash-tray.

"It might," he said, "and I confess that I gave some thought to that possibility. I went so far as to subsidize a burglar myself—for all three of you—a burglar that you didn't shoot, Rolfe." He smiled at him. "I was curious to know whether any of you had been doing any photography lately—and I took steps to find out within twenty-four hours of that envelope being tampered with. Your camera, Rolfe, I find, has a broken shutter and a thick layer of dust inside—you have evidently given up the hobby. Yours, Bruce, happened to be charged with a half-used spool. I developed those films and find they represent the Gymkhana which took place a couple of weeks before."

"That's where that spool went, then!" exclaimed Bruce, suddenly illuminated.

The General went on quietly. "Fanshaw's camera, on the other hand, a very excellent half-plate Zeiss, had no films in it. But it happened to have its focus-adjustment left at three feet, and closed up in the folds of the bellows was a certain amount of grey dust which, having once done a little photography myself, I recognized as magnesium ash."

"Good Lord!" said Bruce.

"I kept the camera and the ash as circumstantial evidence, if necessary," continued the General, "and funnily enough Fanshaw thought fit to complain to me next day that someone had pinched his apparatus. Only he put the date of its disappearance as the day prior to that on which Plan C was tampered with. Since, however, my very excellent burglar found the camera in his room forty hours after Fanshaw alleged that he had missed it, I'm afraid the alibi won't wash."

"But surely, sir," objected Rolfe, "all this—even if it does look fishy—is very flimsy evidence!"

"Very," agreed the General, imperturbably. "But it happens to be reinforced. How much do you think Plan C is worth to—we won't specify the country?"

"They'd pay anything for it," said Bruce. "Twenty thousand pounds or more."

"Precisely. Or more. Now Fanshaw was a poor man—I happen to know that he got into debt in India. I cannot discover that he has since come into any inheritance. Would his wife have had any money, Bruce?"

"Sir!"

"This is no time for fine feelings." The old man crushed him with his sudden formidable severity. "I know perfectly well that you were engaged to the lady. Did she have any money?"

"No, sir."

"Very well. I've been doing a good deal of private cipher-work over the cables these last three weeks—and three days ago the sum of thirty-five thousand pounds was paid in London by banker's draft from the Asiatic Bank to the London and North-Western Bank for the credit of a new account opened in favour of a certain John Smith by telegraphic instruction from Menangpore."

"*Phew!*" ejaculated Rolfe, mopping his brow. "Looks ugly!"

"But, sir," said Bruce, "how do you know that this John Smith is—— No. I can't say I like him, but I can't imagine Fanshaw doing it."

For answer, the General unlocked the drawer at which he sat, produced a telegraph-form.

"This is the original, handed in at the cable-company's office four days back," he said. "'*London North-Western Bank, London, please open account with draft Asiatic Bank thirtyfivethousand letter follows John Smith Menangpore.*' This was handed in by a native who has not yet been traced. But note—the message is typewritten and gummed on to the telegraph-form—and it is written on a Yost machine. There is only one Yost machine in this Garrison, and that happens to be in Fanshaw's office—the one he reserves for his own use. It is true, there are probably other Yosts in Menangpore, but no two machines, even of the same make, write precisely alike. I have personally copied this message again on Fanshaw's machine—here it is." He laid a typewritten slip of paper side by side with the cablegram before them; one looked like a carbon copy of the other. "You see—they are identical, the same weak *n* and *p*, the same worn *c*, the same *f* out of alignment."

"There is no doubt about it," said Bruce, handing them back after careful scrutiny. "But, sir—this is awful!"

"And the letter that follows," inquired Rolfe, "have you got that, sir?"

"That was stopped in the post last night," replied the General, taking another sheet of paper from his drawer. "Here it is. It doesn't tell us much. It merely confirms the cablegram, gives the specimen of the signature 'John Smith,' and orders the money to be held on deposit pending instructions. It is typed on the same machine and addressed from the European Club."

"That doesn't mean much," said Bruce. "Everyone goes there. I was there myself yesterday."

"So was I," said Rolfe.

"So was Fanshaw," added the General.

"I suppose it means a court-martial, sir?" said Rolfe.

The General smiled with the faintest twist of his lips.

"My dear Rolfe," he said, "you are sometimes an amazingly simple person. There is no doubt at all that our friend the possible enemy is already in possession of Plan C. Whatever happens, he mustn't be allowed to guess that *we know he knows it.* Plan C is actually already *ipso facto* obsolete. He must think it is still our real war-plan, and we in blissful ignorance of his stolen knowledge. A court-martial would give him the hint—you can't keep secrecy over things like that. No. A court-martial is out of the question."

"Then—nothing is to be done, sir?" queried Rolfe.

"Oh, yes," said the General, quietly. "We're certainly going to do something. We can't let people play games of this sort with impunity."

"What do you propose, then, sir?" asked Bruce.

THE General kept them in suspense for a moment while he relit his pipe.

"You and Rolfe are going to pay a little friendly call on Fanshaw this afternoon," he said, significantly. He held up the match before them, caught their eyes, blew out the flame.

"Traitors sometimes commit suicide in a fit of remorse—*and leave a signed confession,*" he added, in grim elucidation.

Bruce jumped to his feet, found himself trembling violently.

"Sir—I can't do it!"

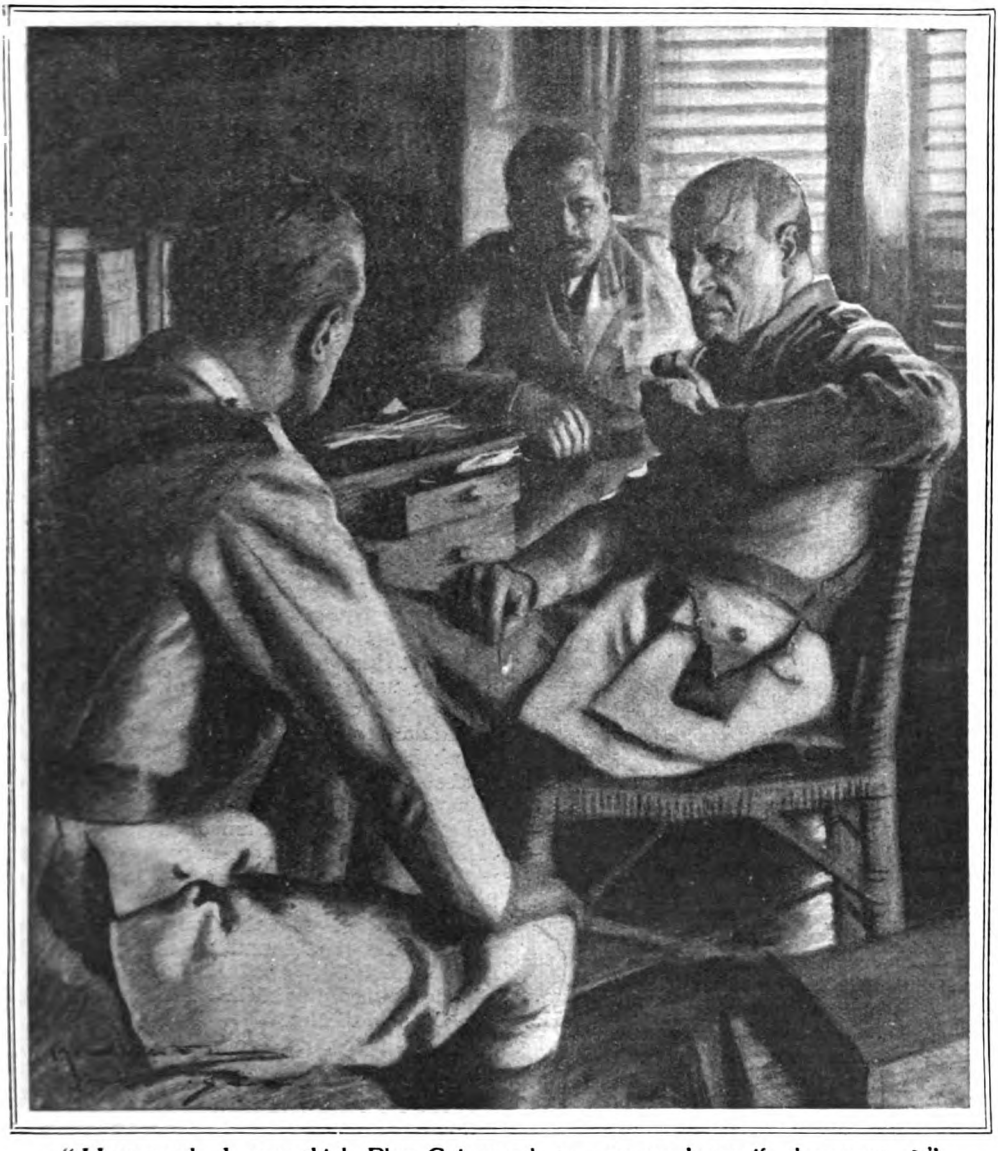
The General turned on him that gaze which he knew how to make suddenly terrible.

"What do you mean?" he asked, sternly.

Bruce felt himself like an audacious schoolboy under those insupportable eyes. But he nerved himself to confront them.

"Sir—I beg of you—choose someone else. It puts me in an impossible—a terrible position."

The General's voice came at him like a clap of thunder.



"How much do you think Plan C is worth to—we won't specify the country?"
"They'd pay anything for it," said Bruce. "Twenty thousand pounds or more."

"Major Bruce! Since when have you learned to disobey my orders?"

It was the same voice, the same inexorably hard face aflame with eyes whose sudden blaze of authority annihilated opposition, with which—Bruce found it recalled to him by an odd trick of memory—at Devil's Wood he had ordered forward the remnant of his brigade to certain death over corpses already three deep. When General Sanderson commanded, men obeyed—without question. Bruce had obeyed then, forgetting the shrinking of his flesh in the storm of shells. He surrendered now, wretchedly, long habit of discipline asserting itself.

Wordlessly, eyes fixed on his, the General accepted his submission. He turned to Rolfe.

"Have you any objection to make, Major Rolfe?" he asked, harshly.

Rolfe stood twisting his handkerchief in his hands, his broad, honest face deathly white, perspiration pearling on his brow.

"No—no, sir," he stammered.

The General's face cleared to an expression that was more kindly. He turned to Bruce.

"I'm sorry to ask this of you, Bruce, but it can't be helped. In the first place, it's your job as Intelligence Officer. In the second, only you, Rolfe, and Fanshaw know anything of this business. We can't admit any more to it. Also, you understand, this is *unofficial*—an affair of honour, between officers and gentlemen. I send Major Fanshaw two of his own rank. I shall expect your report in half an hour. And, remember, *a written and signed confession!*"

Bruce heard him as though he were in a dream. His mind held only one clearly definite thought: Nina! *Nina!* What would Nina think—Nina, whom he had just promised—Nina, whose happiness he was going brutally to annihilate?

It was automatically, as in a dream, that he saluted the General and, with Rolfe, went out of the office.

THEY were within a dozen yards of Fanshaw's bungalow when Rolfe turned to him.

"Oughtn't we to get our revolvers first?" he suggested.

"No." He could not trust his voice to more than curtness. "Unnecessary."

On the step of the veranda Rolfe clutched his arm, spoke again.

"You—you do the talking," he said. "It's your job. I'll back you up."

He nodded in mute acquiescence, summoned all his will to steady the thumping of his heart, to find a voice to talk with.

They entered.

Bruce pushed aside a mat-curtain, saw Fanshaw busy writing at his table. He glanced up at them with his lantern-jawed, tight-lipped, worried-looking face as they came within the threshold.

"Hallo, you fellows!" he said, rather ungraciously. "Paying visits? My wife's out—but you'll find the siphon over there." He jerked his pen towards the sideboard, while his eyes went down again to the letter he was writing. "Help yourselves."

To Bruce's surprise, he found that he could speak.

"Fanshaw——"

Fanshaw looked up again irritably.

"Yes?" And then he saw the ghastliness of their faces. "Why—what's wrong?" His tone changed sharply to startled concern. "Whatever's the matter? You look perfectly awful, both of you."

Again Bruce found that he could speak.

"Fanshaw," he said, "we've come to talk to you—Rolfe and I. D'you mind if we sit down?"

"You'll find chairs there," Fanshaw said, shortly. "What is it?"

They seated themselves, confronting him over his writing-table. Bruce glanced up to the wall behind Fanshaw where a revolver-holster was hanging from a peg.

"D'you mind," he asked, awkwardly, "d'you mind letting me have your revolver, Fanshaw?"

Fanshaw stared at them, puzzled, and then rose, took the revolver-holster from the wall, threw it upon the table rather peevishly. Bruce picked it up.

"Now, then, what's the trouble?" queried Fanshaw, as he sat down again. "What do you want my revolver for? I can see that something is wrong."

Bruce dandled the heavy holster.

"Fanshaw," he said, "we—Rolfe and I—have come on a pretty rotten job. Plan C has been got at and copied."

Fanshaw frowned at him in incredulity.

"*Plan C?*" he echoed. "Good God!"

"Pretty loathsome, isn't it?" said Bruce, between his teeth. He was beginning to hate that thin-faced traitor in front of him—a quite unsuspected fount of deep-drawn instinctive hatred surged up in him—he would dare to try and bluff them, would he? If only he weren't Nina's husband! "Pretty loathsome, Fanshaw," he repeated, with grim directness.

Fanshaw put up an amazingly good show of bewilderment—almost impressive, had it not been for the General's coldly logical step by step demonstration.

"Good God! But the General slept with the keys fastened round his neck—he told me so himself!"

Bruce looked him in the eyes, tried to look into the soul of him.

"We don't want to go into that," he said. "We know all about it. The General has sent us, Rolfe and me, to settle the matter without a public scandal."

"What on earth are you talking about?" Fanshaw looked from one to the other, his face a study in lack of comprehension.

"You know—*perfectly well!*" said Bruce. "The game's up, Fanshaw. There's no use bluffing. You're caught out. We've got the evidence."

Fanshaw stared at them.

"You've—got—the—evidence!" he said, slowly, in a tone that seemed to try to make it real to himself. "What evidence?"

"More than enough for a court-martial to shoot you half-a-dozen times over," replied Bruce, succinctly. "Fanshaw, this is a rotten business. It makes me sick to have to do it. But for the honour of the Army—for the sake of your own family—

we don't want a scandal. We give you an easy way out. We want a written and signed confession—I give you my word that no one shall see it but the General—no one shall know anything about it—and then "—he drew the revolver from the holster, laid it upon the table, pushed it towards Fanshaw—" we'll leave you with this. You can pretend to have been cleaning it."

Fanshaw stared at the revolver, shrank back from it, looked up again at the two of them, a sudden horror in his eyes.

" You mean——? " he began.

Bruce pushed the weapon a little nearer.

" Precisely what I say, Fanshaw," he said. " And no one—not even Nina—shall ever guess." He had used her Christian name unconsciously. " The episode will be buried—with you."

Fanshaw knocked away the revolver, jumped to his feet.

" You must be mad—both of you ! " he cried. " Utterly mad ! I'm going to see the General at once ! " He took a step towards the door.

Bruce placed himself in front of him.

" I'm sorry, Fanshaw. But it can't be allowed. The General sent us to you. He gave us half an hour in which to bring back your written confession." He glanced at his wrist-watch. " Ten minutes of it have gone. You've made a bad break, Fanshaw—but own up, and play out the only decent game open to you. You ought to be grateful for the chance." With a strong arm he thrust him towards the table.

Fanshaw stood looking at them, trembling suddenly, his face as white as theirs.

" Either you are both mad," he cried, " or this is an infernal conspiracy to murder me ! " He looked into Bruce's eyes with an insulting suspicion. " I can imagine that *one* of you has a motive," he said, deliberately. " Though I should not have thought it of you."

Bruce winced as though he had been slashed across the face.

" Leave that out, Fanshaw," he said. " For just that reason I'd rather be dead than here. I'm obeying orders—don't make it harder for me. Will you write out that confession ? "

" Of course not ! I know nothing about it. If anyone has any charges to bring against me, let them be brought forward in a proper manner—and I'll deal with them." He wrapped himself in his dignity as an officer, spoke with curt contempt.

Rolfe intervened for the first time in this colloquy.

" Fanshaw," he said, thickly. " You know that means a court-martial—and I wouldn't give tuppence for your chance."

Fanshaw swung round on him.

" Look here, I've had enough of this ! Clear out, both of you ! And I'll trouble you, both of you, to meet me in front of the General ! "

Rolfe shrugged his big shoulders, looked at Bruce.

" Well," he said, " I suppose if Fanshaw *insists* on a court-martial, we're helpless. We can't compel him to write a confession. The only thing is to report it. We've done our best—and for my part, Fanshaw, I'm glad of an excuse to be out of a very unpleasant business. Come along, Bruce ! "

He took a step towards the door, was checked by Bruce's restraining arm.

" No," said Bruce, his teeth clenched. " We're going to stay here until we've done our job—and there's not going to be any public scandal in this business. Fanshaw ! " he looked him in the eyes, " for the sake of all that was ever sacred to you in the world—for the sake of your old school—the Army—*for your wife's sake !* —play the man and own up decently. You haven't the ghost of a chance before a court-martial, and though they might not shoot you, the disgrace would be worse than death—for you—and "—his voice choked —" for Nina."

Fanshaw's look at him was an insult.

" Major Bruce," he said, " I shall be obliged if you will refer to my wife as Mrs. Fanshaw."

THE three men jumped at a bright girlish voice from the other side of the mat-curtain. " Dick, darling !—I'm back ! —I've escaped ! " There was a happy little laugh as the mat-curtain was pulled back and Nina stood on the threshold. Her fresh young face lit up in pleasant surprise as she saw Bruce. " Why, Frank !—how nice of you to come so soon ! " she exclaimed, coming towards him and stretching out her hand.

Bruce had one glance at her, and something seemed to smite him sharply, viciously, inside him. He turned away his head, omitted to notice her proffered hand. He got his voice somehow.

" Fanshaw," he said, " will you please ask your wife to leave us ? This—this is an official matter."

She came nearer, perceived Rolfe, who had turned to stare at a print upon the wall, and now nodded awkwardly to her. Her eyes went round the three men.

" Why—what is wrong ? " she cried. " What has happened ? You look ghastly, all of you ! "

There was a silence.

" Frank ! What is the matter ? What have you and Major Rolfe come about ? "

He did not reply, avoided her eyes. "Dick!" She clutched his arm. "Tell me!"

Fanshaw shrugged his shoulders, smiled unpleasantly at Bruce.

"My dear," he replied, "apparently some important secret plans have been stolen, and it seems that in some way or other it has been made to look as though I had done it. Consequently, Major Bruce and Major Rolfe have come here with the amiable proposal that I shall write out a confession and then commit suicide." Bruce set his teeth, stifling a groan. *The cad!* Not to keep it from Nina! Fanshaw went on. "Alternatively, I shall be condemned by a court-martial."

She swung round upon Bruce in a flame of indignation.

"*Oh!*" she cried. "And *you* can believe this? *You* could come here to—to——" She made a gesture of horror. "*You*—of all people——"

He met her eyes—and wished that he were dead.

"I couldn't help myself," he managed to say. "I tried—not to have to do it. It was an order—from the General—to both of us."

"*But you believed it!* You believed this of Dick! You—you who had promised me to be his friend—you did not tell the General that it was utterly impossible—you did not stand up for him—you—*you believed it!*" Her contemptuous indignation scorched him.

"I'd have given all I know not to—not to have had to believe it," he said, desperately, "but—but——"

"But what?"

"If I must—the evidence is too convincing!" He cursed himself for saying so much, even as the words were uttered.

"And what is this evidence?"

Bruce turned from her to Fanshaw.

"For God's sake, Fanshaw—I can't stand any more of this—either ask your wife to withdraw—or," he gestured abandonment to disaster, "we must let matters take their official course."

Fanshaw was the least perturbed person in the room.

"I should like to hear your precious evidence myself," he said, with an unpleasant curtness of tone. "Tell her!"

Bruce looked again at the woman whose happiness was the one thing in the world that mattered to him.

"I insist!" she said. "And I have a right to insist!"

HE surrendered to the look of proud authority in her pale face. "I'd infinitely rather not," he said, "but since so much has been said already——" He flashed a glance of scorn at Fanshaw. His face haggard with the long-continued strain, but with a succinct clarity, he told her of the tampering with the secret plan, known to Fanshaw, Rolfe, and himself alone; of the finding of Fanshaw's camera, with the focus set to three feet and flashlight ash still upon the bellows, within twenty-four hours after the plan had been copied and forty hours after Fanshaw had said he had lost it.

"But someone might have stolen Dick's camera, used it, and put it back!" she exclaimed.

"They might," he agreed, "but that's not all." He went on to tell her of the bankers' draft for thirty-five thousand pounds paid by the Asiatic Bank to the credit of a new account opened in an assumed name by cable from Menangpore and confirmed by letter. "And," he concluded, through his set teeth, "both cablegram and letter were typed on your husband's Yost machine which he uses personally."

"Good God!" ejaculated Fanshaw, mopping his face with his handkerchief.

She had listened intently. "And is that all your evidence?" she asked.

"It's damnably convincing, Mrs. Fanshaw—though I hate to say it. The man who got at that plan must have been either your husband, Rolfe, or myself. You can't imagine us coming on a job like this if either of us did it. And all the evidence piles up against——" He broke off abruptly, with a gesture towards Fanshaw. "The whole thing's too ghastly," he finished.

Fanshaw was about to say something when his wife checked him. Her brow was wrinkled with a sudden thought.

"Wait a moment," she said. "What was the name of the bank in London and what name was on the cablegram?"

"The cable was sent by someone signing himself John Smith to the London and North-Western Bank."

"*John Smith?*" She gave a little cry of triumph. "And who handed in that cablegram?"

"A native who has not yet been traced."

"Then perhaps I can throw some light on it. Four days ago, after dark, when I was sitting on the veranda, a native came wandering up the road and asked me, in broken English, if I had seen a certain officer. I could not understand him very well at first, and as he had a piece of paper in his hand, I made him show it to me, thinking that it would give the name. That piece of paper was the receipt from the cable company for a cablegram sent to the London and North-Western Bank by John Smith. I didn't know the name, and I asked him if he was sure it was 'Smith' he wanted. He said: 'No—no—Major

Sahib Roff—*Major Sahib Roff!*' And I sent him along to Major Rolfe's bungalow!"

"That's a lie!" Rolfe burst out, furiously. "A stupid lie!"

"Steady, Rolfe!" said Bruce. "You forget you are speaking to a lady."

"She'd tell any yarn, of course, to save her husband—and it is a lie!" Rolfe reiterated.

"That same evening," she went on, coldly ignoring the interruption, "we heard that Major Rolfe had shot a native who was trying to burgle his house."

"That's true enough," exclaimed Rolfe. "I just caught the brute as he was clambering through the window. But the other is sheer imagination. Look here, Bruce, I'm not going to stay here while Mrs. Fanshaw invents red herrings to draw across the trail. She can tell that story to the court-martial. I'm going back to the General to report that Fanshaw refuses to sign a confession. Come along!" He took a step towards the door.

"No!" cried Mrs. Fanshaw. She stepped in front of him with a quick movement, blocked the doorway. "You will please wait a little, Major Rolfe!" she said, and then turned to Bruce. "Frank! Supposing—I only ask you to suppose—that Major Rolfe was the one of you three who sent that cablegram, and that he still has the receipt in his pocket—is it safe to let him go out of here, and perhaps destroy it? It might be the one piece of evidence that could save Dick."

"Nonsense!" said Rolfe, angrily. "It is a monstrous suggestion! Please let me pass, Mrs. Fanshaw!"

She ignored him, looked at Bruce.

"Frank! I want you to search Major Rolfe before he leaves this room."

Fanshaw interposed.

"My dear, whatever you think—one can't do things like that. You can't expect Bruce to insult a brother officer on your mere supposition. But"—he glanced sharply at Rolfe—"in view of what you have said, we will all accompany him to the General."

She turned to her husband.

"Dick," she said, "you are under suspicion, and anything you say or do may harm you. Leave this to me." She looked again at Bruce. "Frank! Please do as I say!"

BRUCE hesitated, glanced at Rolfe, who was red with indignation, his hands working irritably, as he stood unable to pass Mrs. Fanshaw without sheer violence to her. It was impossible—fantastic! No man could have come on such an errand if he were himself guilty. He despised himself for even momentarily admitting the suspicion.

"But, Mrs. Fanshaw, what you ask of me is outrageous. Rolfe and I have been friends for years. It is unthinkable that he should have done it. You must have been mistaken about that native."

"I am not mistaken," she replied, doggedly. "Frank!—things have been made to look black for Dick. He needs a pal—badly. To-day you gave me your word. Are you going to break it?" Her eyes challenged all he had ever felt for her.

He took a long breath, looked at Rolfe—cheery, thoroughly decent Rolfe, who now stood outraged by this diabolical supposition. All the long years of their intimacy rose up in protest. Insult him for that man he had no doubt was guilty, that man he had to keep himself from hating—Nina's husband? Nina's husband! Yes—*just because of that!* There was just one faint, improbable chance. He had to have it. He turned to Fanshaw.

"Fanshaw, before I insult Rolfe, I ask you—before God—whether you sold that plan?"

"Before God," replied Fanshaw, with sober emphasis, "I did not."

Bruce twisted himself round to Rolfe.

"Rolfe," he said, "I hate to even seem to suspect you of such a horrible thing, but I must ask you to let me go through your pockets."

"Certainly not!" said Rolfe, indignantly. "I have just as much right to search you! Mrs. Fanshaw can make her absurd accusation before the court-martial—and the court will decide whether Major Fanshaw is guilty or not. But I'm certainly not going to submit to the indignity of letting you go through my private papers without any authorization whatever!" His broad face was livid with anger.

Bruce placed himself in front of Mrs. Fanshaw, blocking the doorway. For the first time a real suspicion shot up in him.

"Rolfe," he said, steadily, "I am certainly going to search you—even if I knock you down for it."

"You'd better try," replied Rolfe, in furious scorn. "I'm going straight to the General—and I advise you to stand away from that door."

Bruce smiled. The next moment Rolfe had rushed at him, and, rushing, met a straight left from the shoulder. He went with a crash to the floor.

Before he could stir, Bruce was on top of him, one hand on his throat, the other going through the pockets of his tunic. He extracted a letter-wallet, held it out to Mrs. Fanshaw. She took it, went to the window, examined it, uttered a sharp little cry.

"Here it is."

Bruce got to his feet, reached for the revolver on the table, held Rolfe covered.

"What is it?" he asked. "Here, Fanshaw, take the gun and see he doesn't rush."

He went to the window, took the two pieces of paper Mrs. Fanshaw handed to him. One was the receipt from the cable company; the other was covered with evidently practice-signatures of "John Smith." He turned to Rolfe, who had also scrambled to his feet and stood sullenly scared and silent under the menace of Fanshaw's weapon.

"Have you got anything to say?"

An ugly word was the only answer.

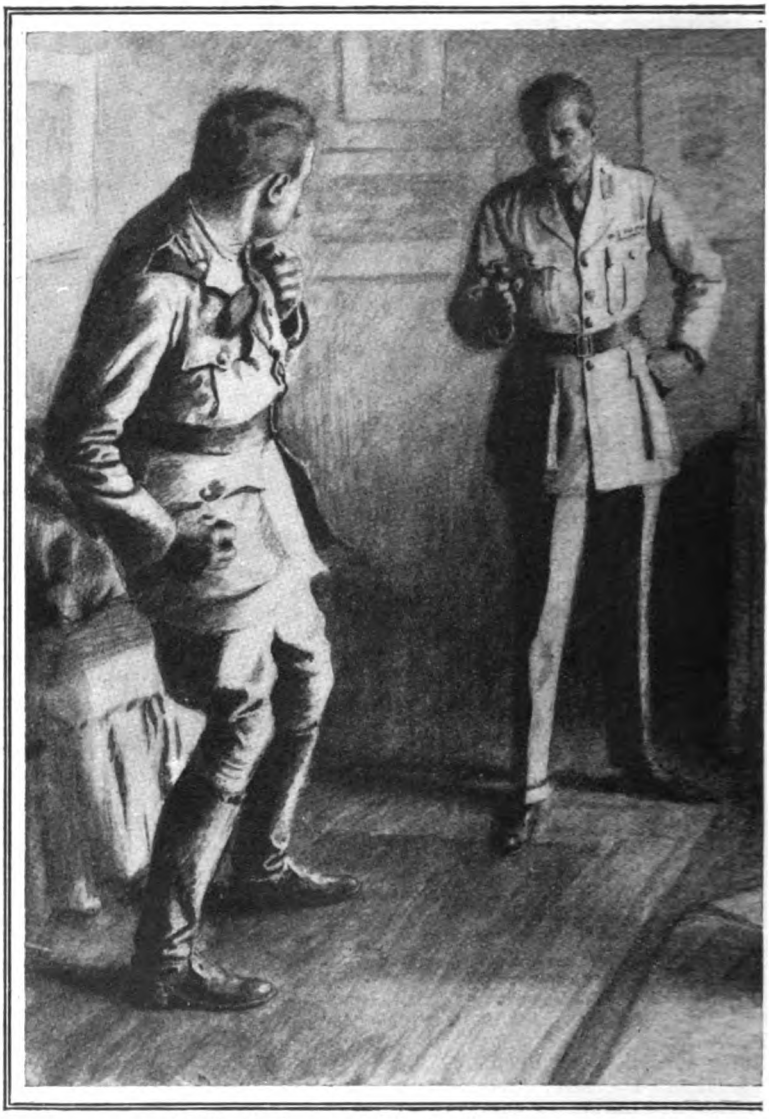
Bruce addressed himself to Mrs. Fanshaw.

"Mrs. Fanshaw," he said, with a quietly grim politeness, "will you now please leave us? You have played your part. Dick and I will do the rest."

She went straight out of the room. The three men, left alone, stood looking at one another in a pause of silence. It was Bruce who broke it.

"Rolfe," he said, curtly, "I once had the honour of serving under your father. He was a gallant gentleman. For his sake, I give you the chance the General sent us to give Fanshaw." He pointed to the table. "Sit down—and write! And afterwards Fanshaw and I will see you as far as your bungalow."

Rolfe stood staring at him, a little foam upon the lips of his broad white face. For a moment he looked into Bruce's eyes,



Rolfe had scrambled to his feet and stood sullenly
"Mrs. Fanshaw," said Bruce, "will you now please leave us?

measured the inexorability of that decision, and then, slowly, unsteadily, he walked towards the writing-table.

The General was still at his desk, leaning back in his chair, blowing meditative smoke-

rings towards the ceiling, when Bruce entered, saluted.

"And Rolfe ?" he asked, as his eyes came down to Bruce's solitary figure.

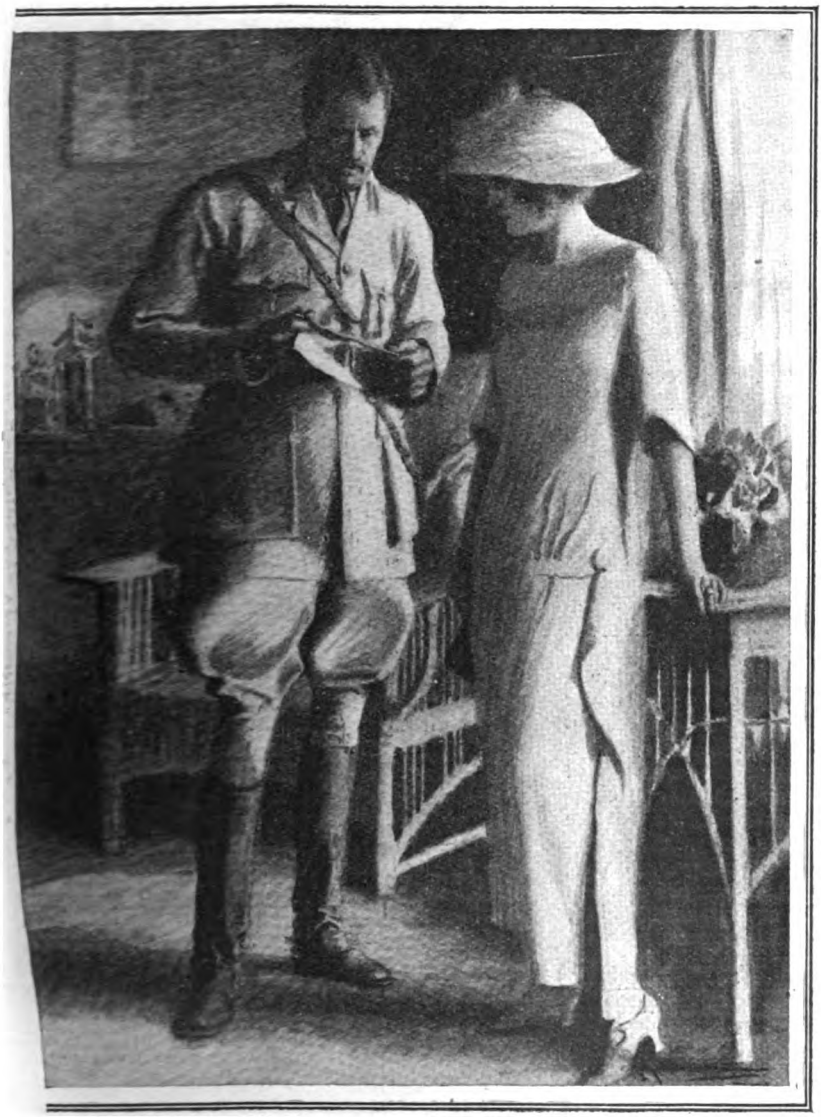
Bruce stepped forward, handed him a written sheet of note-paper, pointed shakily to the signature at the bottom.

"Here, sir," he said, in a voice that lacked steadiness for all his effort at self-command.

The General contemplated it, shifted his pipe from one side of his mouth to the other, bit upon the stem.

"H'm!" he said. "And afterwards ?" He looked up at him.

Bruce blew out an imaginary match.



scared and silent under the menace of Fanshaw's weapon.
You have played your part. Dick and I will do the rest."

The General nodded. Methodically he folded up the paper, put it in an envelope, sealed it, and locked it in his drawer. Then he smiled grimly.

"A bad hat," he said. "I was pretty sure he was the man, but everything pointed to Fanshaw. Rolfe's frontal defence was as good as impregnable. And we learnt in France, I think, not to make frontal attacks on impregnable defences. There's nearly always a way round."

Bruce stared at him.

"Then you guessed, sir ?"

The General shrugged his shoulders.

"It was one of the two. I knew Fanshaw wouldn't sign if he were innocent, and I sent you to see fair play. The art of war, my dear Bruce, is the art of producing sudden crises and taking measures to profit by them. You can never foresee exactly how you'll do it, but you nearly always get what you want—if you put the right man on the job. In the very special circumstances," he smiled significantly, "I knew you were the right man."

The Forbidden Subject

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

ILLUSTRATED BY H.K.ELCOCK

BOTH the boys were becoming very fair boxers and full of the spirit of the game. Even little Billie, the nine-year-old girl, was touched with it. She could swing a fine loose left, and her right jab to the tummy has been favourably commented upon in influential quarters. But, after all, it is not of much practical use to her sex. It was different with the boys.

A famous amateur champion had given them two pairs of small gloves, and never was a gift better bestowed. They took to the game like ducklings to the water, and a hen foster-mother was never more proud and fearful and surprised, all in one compound emotion, than was the lady when she found her two male children welting each other in furious combat, and yet grinning in the utmost good nature over the contest.

They have different styles, and Daddy, watching with critical but approving eyes, is not too quick to alter and make conventional that which has been taught by Nature. Laddie is of the old British tradition, straight-standing, firm-footed, with a quick straight left and a covering guard. Dimples is half American and half unalloyed Nature. He sinks his chin on his chest, his left vibrates in front of him like a curious antenna which either guards or strikes, while his right is his real offensive weapon, round-handed, with a touch of uppercut, and a fine natural swing. He is the more aggressive and dangerous, but on points the left prop must win. But the charge of the younger might shake his opponent and rattle him, and after that anything would be possible.

"They really shape very well," said Daddy, in private consultation with the lady.

She had shown her usual sense in the matter. "Of course, dear, boys ought to be able to defend themselves, and be manly and brave. But don't you think that book of old fights with the pictures—— ?"

"Yes, I do. I've locked it up in my room."

"And the stories of those old days. They *were* rather brutal, were they not, when they fought for money and without gloves ? Yet Laddie is for ever drawing you on to tell about them. Do you think it wise ?"

"They were grand old fellows, dear. They kept up all our ideals of courage and fair play. If it had not been for the blackguards——"

"I know, dear. But, still, your descriptions are occasionally a little too graphic. And they love it so. They simply sit with their eyes glued upon you, lost to the world, while you talk of it. And Laddie is getting to know such a surprising amount about it. Dimples, too, tells me the most awful stories, which I trace to you."

"Well, dear, when they are so interested and inquisitive, it is not in human nature——"

"But they are interested in moths and caterpillars."

"Right-o ! Prize-ring is off ! Moths and caterpillars are on."

So it was arranged, and Daddy had the best of resolutions, but he was overlooking the main point of all, that he was himself interested and knowledgeable when it came to old fights, and therefore could be interesting to others, while what he knew about caterpillars would not overcrowd a pill-box.

Copyright, 1923, by A. Conan Doyle.

The mind will work on the line of least resistance.

A couple of days later, when the lady's wise words had lost their full force, Daddy sat in his arm-chair with his pipe, and he manfully chatted about caterpillars, rather handicapped by the fact that Dimples was an expert upon the subject, and had forgotten rather more than his Daddy ever knew. Then the clever little brains began to work, and this was how they did it.

"It's the oak-egger, not the privet hawk, that you mean, Daddy," said Dimples, "but I expect your memory has so much in it you have no room for the moths."

"Daddy has a fine memory."

"Used to have," said Daddy, apologetically.

"Could you say all the kings of England?"

"Well, most people can do that."

"I'll tell you what Daddy can do," said Laddie. "He can give the names of all the heavy-weight champions of England from the beginning, with their dates and who beat them, and how they were beaten. Couldn't you, Daddy?"

"Well, perhaps I could. Now, about this blessed moth——"

"But you couldn't really, Daddy," interrupted Dimples.

"He could; I've tried him. Ask him one yourself."

"Who was the first champion, Daddy?"

"Well, I suppose you would call Fig the first champion," said Daddy, with his foot deep in the trap. "Yes, you can't go farther back than Fig."

"Oh, do tell us about Fig." Three pairs of elbows were on three pairs of knees, and three absorbed listeners were ready for the forbidden subject.

"Fig was what you might call an all-round fighter. I expect Master Fig would soon be warned off if he put in an appearance at the National Sporting Club. It was 'all in' in those days. He had a place up in the Tottenham Court Road, if I remember right, and he would take anyone on at anything. If you wanted a good hiding with an ashen single-stick, or your head opened with a broadsword, or your nose flattened with a blow, Fig was the man to do it."

"But he wouldn't hurt his own pupils, would he?"

"Oh, wouldn't he just! Captain Godfrey said he was a man of a rugged temper, and would spare no man, high or low, who took up a stick against him. That meant a good deal in those rough old days. Godfrey ought to know, for he was one of the pupils."

"Did he get hurt by Fig?"

"Rather. But he stuck it out as a gentleman should, and took all Fig could give him and came back for more, until Fig found two could play at that game, and wasn't so fond of knocking him about."

"Who was Godfrey?"

"He was a great fellow, a fine sportsman, and a grand writer. We can't judge his fighting now, but we can judge his prose, and he had Sam Johnson and all the rest of them beaten to pieces. So far as I know, he only wrote the one little book, but it has the best English of his time. I used to be able to quote some of it, but I don't remember as clearly as I used to. There was his description of how Broughton used to guard and counter. I can remember that. He says, 'He bids a welcome to the coming blow. Then with a general summons of his swelling muscles, and his firm body seconding his arm and supplying it with all its weight, he pours his pile-driving force upon his man.'"

"Fine!" cried Dimples. "Fine!" His grey eyes were shining and his cheeks flushed, for he had the soul of an artist, and every true note in music, colour, or phrase found its answer in him.

"Who came next, Daddy?" he asked.

BUT this was a little too obvious, and Daddy began to be conscious of a conspiracy.

"I'm not going through the list. Don't you think it! Let's get back to that oak-egger."

"No, but really there was just one thing I wanted to ask," cried Laddie, with a great appearance of large-eyed sincerity. "Who was it who beat Slack?"

"Why, surely it was Stephens the Nailor, a man of no great consequence; but then Slack was of no great consequence either; and yet the Nailor has survived in common speech, for often when folk are describing some tip-top man they say 'he's a nailor.'"

"But, Daddy," said the boy, cleverly argumentative, to keep the ball rolling, "you said that Slack was of no consequence. How can you say that, when he beat the wonderful old champion, whose name I forget, but you said he held the belt for twenty years?"

"Broughton. Jack Broughton. Well, it's true Slack beat him, but it was one of those battles which are decided by a single chance hit, and the worst man wins. Broughton got a single crack between the eyes, probably from over-confidence, and, as he was not in good training, both his eyes puffed and he went blind. Poor old chap, he went feeling his way round the ring, and crying, 'I'm not beat, your Royal Highness, but I can't see my man.' Unfortunately, his man could see him, so that was the end of the great

Jack Broughton, who wanted to fight the whole regiment of Prussian Guards, one down another come on."

"But what had he to do with the Prussian Guards?"

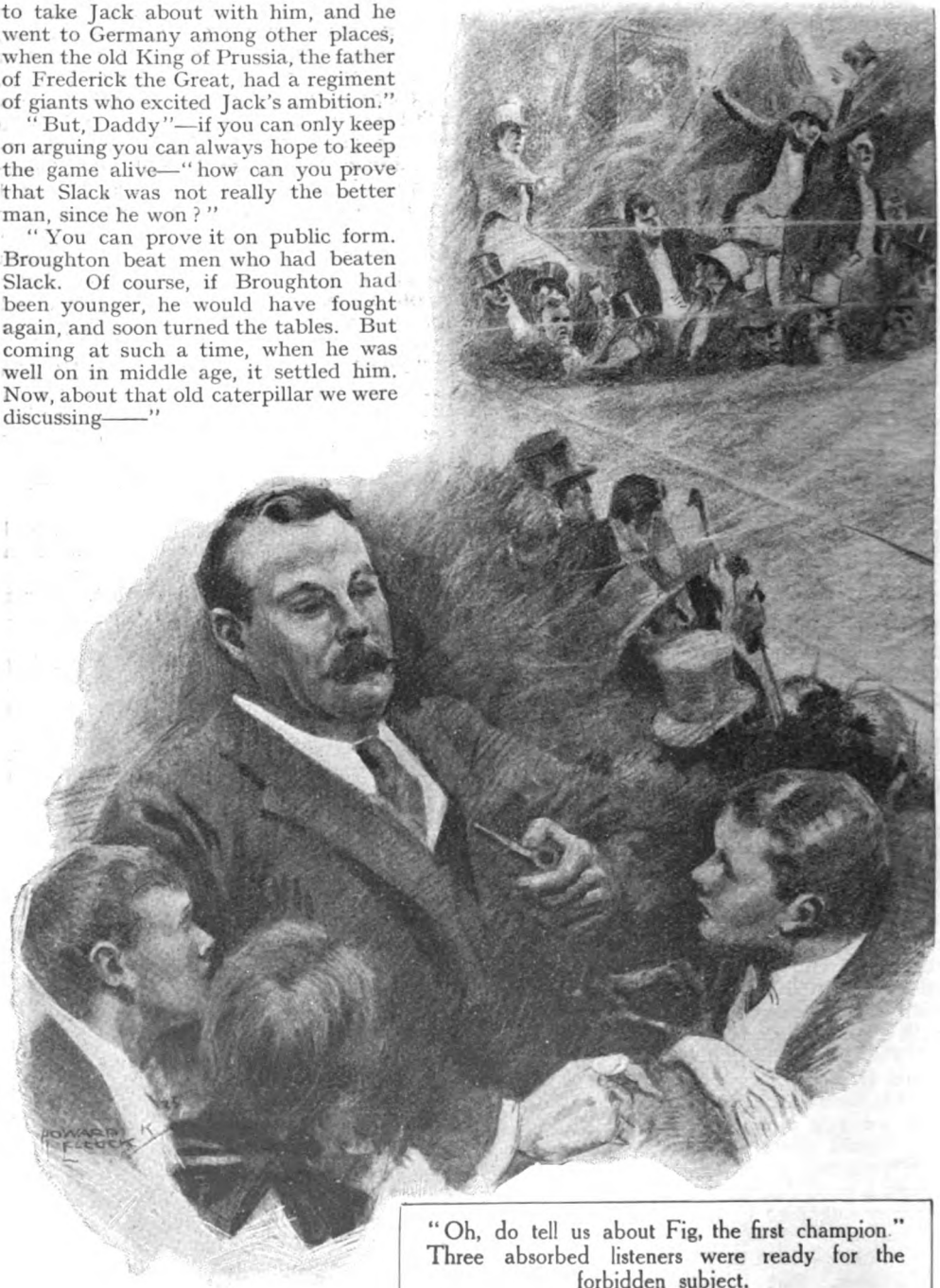
"Well, the Duke of Cumberland used to take Jack about with him, and he went to Germany among other places, when the old King of Prussia, the father of Frederick the Great, had a regiment of giants who excited Jack's ambition."

"But, Daddy"—if you can only keep on arguing you can always hope to keep the game alive—"how can you prove that Slack was not really the better man, since he won?"

"You can prove it on public form. Broughton beat men who had beaten Slack. Of course, if Broughton had been younger, he would have fought again, and soon turned the tables. But coming at such a time, when he was well on in middle age, it settled him. Now, about that old caterpillar we were discussing——"

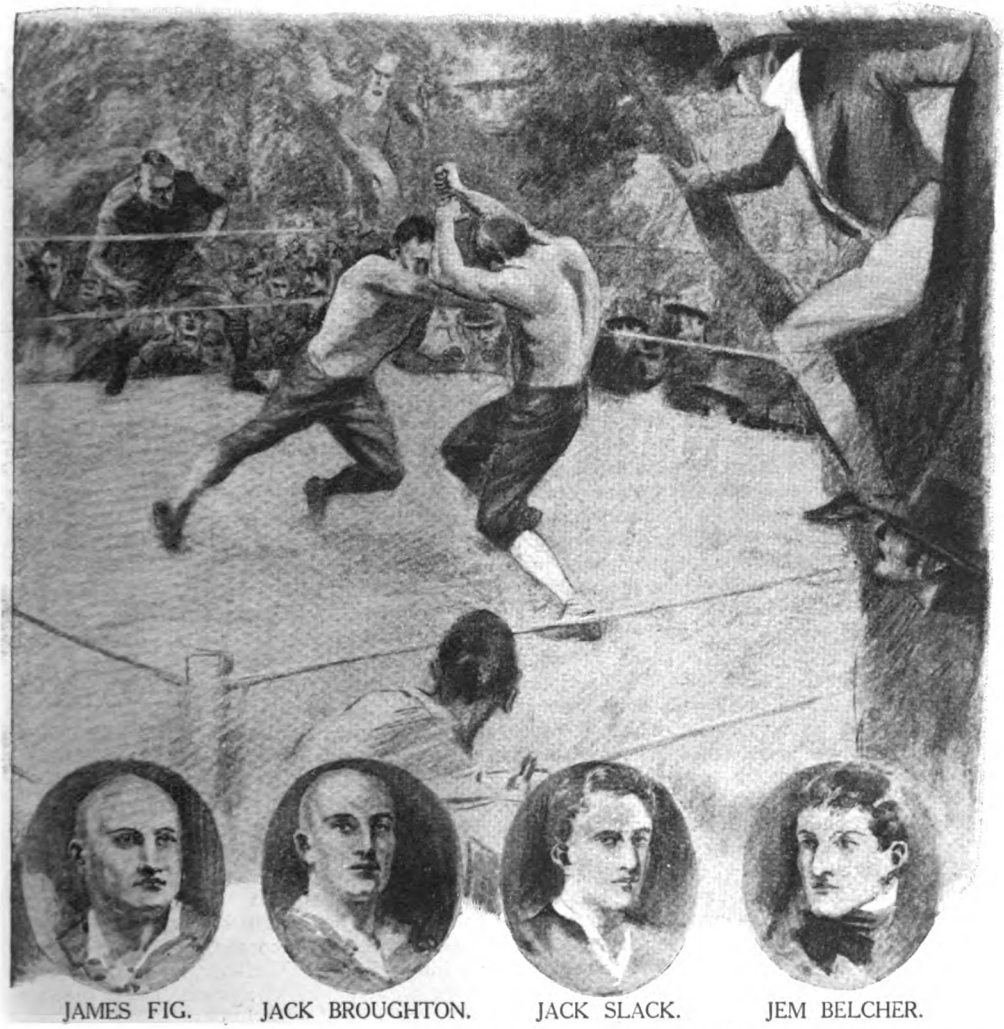
"Just one other thing, Daddy. You were saying that several men had lost battles just by single chance blows: who did you mean?"

"Oh, there are plenty of examples, both



"Oh, do tell us about Fig, the first champion." Three absorbed listeners were ready for the forbidden subject.

in old times and more recently. For example, Mace was winning his fight against Tom King with the greatest ease, when his foot slipped, and at that instant he received a terrible blow from which he never had all his time. Then, of course, there was the downfall of Hickman, the terrible gasman, who invented the whisker blow, which is the father of our knock-out blow to the jaw. The Bristol butcher, Neate, was really



JAMES FIG. JACK BROUGHTON. JACK SLACK. JEM BELCHER.

time to recover. Then there was Tom Spring. His record would, so far as I can remember, have been one long series of victories, but for his bad luck once with Ned Painter, of Norwich, whom he beat once before comfortably enough. Painter was said to have some physical peculiarity in his right shoulder which gave great force to his blow, and as he chanced to get it home in the first round, down went Master Spring for the first and last time. But Painter was an awkward chap for anyone. He was beaten by Shaw, the giant Lifeguardsman, who laid out so many French Cuirassiers at Waterloo. But it took him not of the same class, for Hickman was a wonder, yet that one blow did it. No doubt Hickman would have had his revenge, if it were not for his dreadful death."

"Why was his death dreadful?"

"Well, dear boy, he died drunk, and I cannot conceive anything more dreadful than that."

"What killed him, then?"

"He was coming back drunk from a fight—I think it was the Hudson-Shelton battle—and he was upset from his gig, and a wagon wheel went right over his head. He had killed a dog with a poker at the last inn he had stopped at."

"Then it served him jolly well right!" cried Dimples, who is a great champion of animals.

"Same here!" chirped Billie.

"Oh, do go on, Daddy!" cried the elder boy. "We do love it so! Tell us anything about the Ring."

Daddy was conscious now of how deeply he was bogged, but it was no use stopping when the mischief was done. "Well, my dears, it's against orders, and it's the last time. What more do you want to know?"

"Who do you think was the finest fighter of them all?"

"That's a matter of opinion. I don't remember any good man in the old days—nor in modern times either—who got through without at least one defeat. Jem Belcher was beaten three times, and yet I think he was the greatest natural fighter that ever jumped into a ring. On the whole, I should vote for him."

"But why, if he was beaten three times?"

"Because he was only beaten after his eye had been cut out."

"Oo! Who cut it out?" asked Dimples, who is always on the look-out for horrors.

"It was a racquet ball that cut it out, and put that splendid machine out of gear. And yet his proud, brave nature would not give in, and rose in fury against the thought that any should be champion but he. Have you seen his picture?"

"No."

"Well, it's in that book—— Oh, Lord, no, it's nowhere at all, but you can take it from me that he was a grand falcon of a man to look at. He was slight, and just under six foot, with no showy muscle, but he could throw a cricket-ball over a hundred yards with each hand, and that will give you an idea of his hitting power."

"Who were the men who beat him?"

"Hen Pearce, the Game Chicken, beat him. It was a sad business, for they were bosom friends, but Jem's ardent spirit would brook no rival. 'I fear to hurt your other eye, Jem,' cried the gallant Chicken from time to time in the fight. The other two fights were with Cribb. Cribb was slow and stolid, and he knew well that he had no chance with the speed and fire of Belcher, but he reckoned on two things: the single eye, which interfered with judgment of distance, and the thickness of his own skull. 'He will break his hands to pieces on my head,' said he before the fight. So it happened, and Cribb won, though not till Belcher was senseless, for that was the way of those bulldogs. And it's worth while to remember it, boys!" cried Daddy, warming suddenly to a favourite hobby. "If ever you have to fight a long fight, either with your mind or your body, and if you sicken and weary, as all of us do in our weaker moments, say to yourselves, 'Well, if those poor ignorant chaps would fight to the last gasp for next to nothing, is it not for me, a gentleman, to fight till I am senseless too, or dead, if you like, before I give in over what I know to be right?' I don't mind telling you, my dears, that there have been times when it was not the words of good and pious men, but the memory and example of those old rascals, that helped me over a rough patch of the road."

DADDY paused to let the sentiment sink in, but general reflections don't interest children, though they may come back to them later.

"What did Jem Belcher do then?"

"He died of a broken heart, as many of these old heroes did when they were really up against it. Exactly the same thing happened to George Taylor, who came after Fig. His eye was knocked out, he lost his battle with Faulkner, the cricketer, and he broke his heart, dying within a couple of months."

"Was Faulkner a very good cricketer?" asked Laddie, whose heart is all with the national game.

"I don't know about that. I suppose he must have been pretty good, for he is always so described. Anyhow, he was a most desperate fighter. He was one of the famous three from Birmingham."

"Who were the three from Birmingham?"

"Oh, come, I am sure I've told you that story. Birmingham was only a small place then—the 'hardware village,' they called it—but it was already a great sporting centre. What do you think this little place did one day? They challenged London."

"Hurrah!" cried the children.

"The Birmingham three were Perrins, the giant, who weighed seventeen stone in hard training; Jacombs, of whom I know nothing; and Faulkner, the cricketer. They were matched against Tom Johnson, Champion of England, Big Ben Brain, and Ingleston, the brewer. The Londoners won all three battles, but the interest centred on the giant and the champion. It was a very stern and worthy contest, and though Johnson won, it is said that he never recovered from the ponderous blows he received. Anyhow, he died not very long afterwards."

"I wish little Birmingham had won," said Laddie. "But that other Londoner, Big Ben Brain, wasn't he champion afterwards?"

"Yes, he had the better of Tom Johnson. We get a glimpse of Big Ben in the writings of Borrow, a splendid man whose books you

will read some day. Borrow's father was a grenadier in the Army, and a bit of a scrapper himself. One day he seems to have met Ben Brain in Hyde Park, and they paired off for a fight, quite in a cheerful and sociable way. The grenadier held his own, and became quite a friend of Brain's. Borrow describes how, when his father was dying, his memory went back to this old battle, and he described it and his terrible opponent, with the little descriptive touch that, as Brain pulled his shirt over his head before the conflict, he showed that his body was 'swarthy and mottled like a toad.'"

"Why was it mottled?"

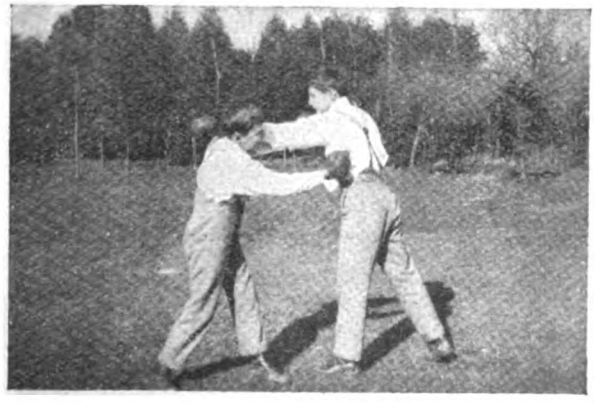
"I expect," said Dimples, "it was all the beatings he had had."

"Maybe he was cold," suggested Daddy. "Anyhow, it brings him clearly back to us after all the years—a dusky, sullen, inexorable sort of man. He died three years after he won the Championship from Johnson. They didn't live long in those rough old days, for even the educated classes drank far more than was good for them, so you can imagine how it was with these poor fellows, who were taken about and made much of by the rich, so long as they were successful, and then deserted the moment some better man came along. But I owe Ben Brain thanks for one thing. He gave that beast, Hooper, the tinman, the thrashing he deserved."

"Why was he a beast?"

"Well, he was what they used to call a hired bully. He would let himself out to some dissipated young scoundrel. Then this fellow would insult decent people in public places, and if you remonstrated you were likely to get your face knocked in by this bully, who would be in attendance. Bully Hooper used to walk behind a certain noble lord at Vauxhall Gardens and fight his quarrels, in which he was always in the wrong. On one occasion he even went the length of dressing the bully up as a clergyman, but I think that ended by trying the patience of the public too far, and both he and his patron were driven out of the Gardens."

"What became of him?"



"The end of even the good fighting men was not generally very happy, and most of them died young, so you can think that the black sheep were not more fortunate. Hooper died in the workhouse, diseased and wretched."

"Well, he deserved it," said Laddie, "but I don't like to think that all these other brave men had such sad ends."

"There is a good deal to be said on the other side. I don't bear in mind the fate of many of them, but, speaking from memory, I could give quite a list of those who did pretty well in life, and invested their winnings in a wise way. Broughton used to buy and sell curios and furniture, and lived to be over eighty. Humphries became a successful coal merchant. Cribb and Spring were both successful publicans, and lived to be about sixty. Perrins, the giant, became a very old man. Ward, the black diamond, lived to be eighty, and used to exhibit at the Royal Academy. He was quite a good painter. Of course, in these days, many of the best boxers are men of some culture, and all of them are, or should be, fairly rich men. But the best of them all was Gully, who said that he had three ambitions—to be Champion of England, to win the Derby, and to be a member of Parliament. I think he won all three, certainly the first and the last. He became M.P. for Pontefract, which really means—what, Laddie?"

"Broken bridge."

"Good boy! One place up! Rather a good name for a prizefighter to represent, for their noses are generally a bit off the plumb. And now——"

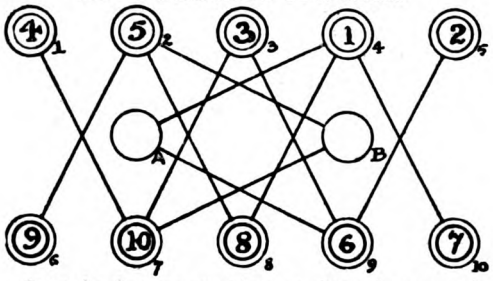
"Daddy, do tell us about Molyneux."

"Look here, we have really talked too much. I was a fool to let you start me. And I hear Mumby's step in the passage. Not a word more about fights. Yes, my dears, caterpillars do lay eggs. Also they turn into cocoons, or cocoons turn into caterpillars, I am not sure which. We have had a most edifying talk, dear, but it's a glorious day, and I think we should all be better out on the links"

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

661.—DISORDERED COUNTERS.



COPY the diagram roughly on a sheet of paper and place ten numbered counters in the positions shown. The puzzle is to slide one counter at a time along a line from circle to circle until you get them in the order 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 in the top row and 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 in the bottom row, with A and B still vacant. Can you do this in the fewest possible moves? Two successive moves with the same counter count as one. The first move must obviously be made by either the 1, 5, 6, or 10 counter. The correspondent, at Yokohama, who suggested this puzzle in a somewhat different form requires as many as 50 moves, but this number may be reduced. I will show the shortest method next month.

662.—BEESWAX.

THE word BEESWAX represented a number in a criminal's secret code, but the police had no clue until they discovered among his papers the following sum :—

E A S E B S B S X
B P W W K S E T Q

K P E P W E K K Q

The detectives assumed that it was an addition sum, and utterly failed to solve it. Then one man hit on the brilliant idea that perhaps it was a case of subtraction. This proved to be correct, and by substituting a different figure for each letter, so that it worked out correctly, they obtained the secret code. What number does BEESWAX represent?

663.—MY LADY'S GARDEN.

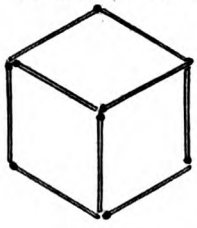
THE following appeared in an old mathematical book. It is quite easy to solve, but unfortunately we are not told whether the measurements represent yards, rods, or anything else.

A lady, wealthy, kind, and fair,
Your aid, dear sirs, would gladly share,
In finding of a plot of ground
Which three right lines exactly bound.
The space and ambit (that you're told)
Both the same number just unfold.
The sides (more data to supply—
Your skill she'd not severely try)
Are in an arithmetic train,
And a right angle too contain.
Now, sure, this fair you may relieve
And show what science can achieve.

664.—THE RUNNER'S REFRESHMENT.

A MAN runs n times round a circular track whose radius is t miles. He drinks s quarts of beer for every mile that he runs. Prove that he will only need one quart!

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.



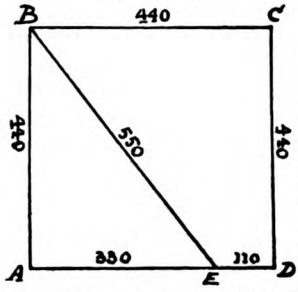
656.—THE SIX-SIDED FIGURE.

THE illustration shows the simple answer. We did not ask for a *plane* figure, nor for the figure to be *formed* with the nine matches. We *show* (in perspective) a *cube* (a regular six-sided figure).

657.—A CRYPTIC SENTENCE.

THE sentence reads: "Give attention and be convinced." That is, G (IV) E, a T ten T (10) N, and B, C on V in CED.

658.—A RUNNING PUZZLE.



EACH side of the field is 440 yards, B A E is a right-angled triangle, A E being 330 yards and B E 550 yards. Now, if Brown could run 550 yards while Adams ran 360 (330+30), then Brown can run the remaining 110 yards while Adams runs 72 yards. But 30 +72=102 yards leaves Adams just 8 yards behind. Brown won by 8 yards.

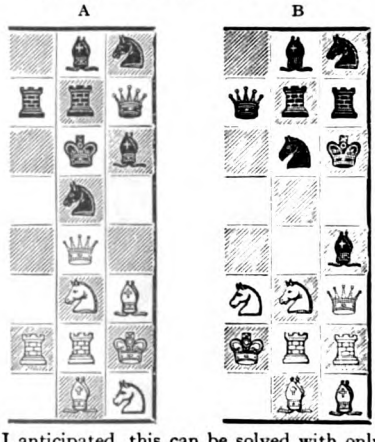
659.—AN EASY ENIGMA.

HE—HER—HERO—HEROINE.

660.—CONCERNING A CUBE.

(1).—6ft. (2).—1·57ft. nearly. (3).—$\frac{1}{8}$ft.

651.—BLOCK AND PIN PUZZLE.



AS I anticipated, this can be solved with only four pieces able to move. A is by W. E. Lester and B by J. R. van der Pot (Holland). There are other ways in four.

FIRST AID FOR DORA

by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

NEVER in the course of a long and intimate acquaintance having been shown any evidence to the contrary, I had always looked on Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge, my boyhood chum, as a man ruggedly indifferent to the appeal of the opposite sex. I had assumed that, like so many financial giants, he had no time for dalliance with women—other and deeper matters, I supposed, keeping that great brain permanently occupied. It was a surprise, therefore, when, passing down Shaftesbury Avenue one Wednesday afternoon in June at the hour when *matinée* audiences were leaving the theatres, I came upon him assisting a girl in a white dress to mount an omnibus.

As far as this simple ceremony could be rendered impressive, Ukridge made it so. His manner was a blend of courtliness and devotion ; and if his mackintosh had been a shade less yellow and his hat a trifle less disreputable, he would have looked just like Sir Walter Raleigh.

The bus moved on, Ukridge waved, and I proceeded to make inquiries. I felt that I was an interested party. There had been a distinctly " object-matrimony " look about the back of his neck, it seemed to me ; and the prospect of having to support a Mrs. Ukridge and keep a flock of little Ukridges in socks and shirts perturbed me.

" Who was that ? " I asked.

" Oh, hullo, laddie ! " said Ukridge, turning. " Where did you spring from ? If you had come a moment earlier, I'd have introduced you to Dora." The bus was lumbering out of sight into Piccadilly Circus, and the white figure on top turned and gave a final wave. " That was Dora Mason," said Ukridge, having flapped a large hand in reply. " She's my aunt's secretary-companion. I used to see a bit of her from time to time when I was living at Wimbledon. Old Tuppy gave me a couple of seats for that show at the Apollo, so I thought it would be a kindly act to ask her along. I'm sorry for that girl. Sorry for her, old horse."

" What's the matter with her ? "

" Hers is a grey life. She has few pleasures. It's an act of charity to give her a little treat now and then. Think of it ! Nothing to do all day but brush the Pekingese and type out my aunt's rotten novels."

" Does your aunt write novels ? "

" The world's worst, laddie, the world's worst. She's been steeped to the gills in literature ever since I can remember. They've just made her president of the Pen and Ink Club. As a matter of fact, it was her novels that did me in when I lived with her. She used to send me to bed with the beastly things and ask me questions about them at breakfast. Absolutely without exaggeration, laddie, at breakfast. It was a dog's life and I'm glad it's over. Flesh and blood couldn't stand the strain. Well, knowing my aunt, I don't mind telling you that my heart bleeds for poor little Dora. I know what a foul time she has, and I feel a better, finer man for having

Copyright, 1923, by P. G. Wodehouse.

given her this passing gleam of sunshine. I wish I could have done more for her."

"Well, you might have stood her tea after the theatre."

"Not within the sphere of practical politics, laddie. Unless you can sneak out without paying, which is dashed difficult to do with these cashiers watching the door like weasels, tea even at an A.B.C. shop punches the pocket-book pretty hard, and at the moment I'm down to the scrapings. But I'll tell you what, I don't mind joining you in a cup, if you were thinking of it."

"I wasn't."

"Come, come! A little more of the good old spirit of hospitality, old horse."

"Why do you wear that beastly mackintosh in midsummer?"

"Don't evade the point, laddie. I can see at a glance that you need tea. You're looking pale and fagged."

"Doctors say that tea is bad for the nerves."

"Yes, possibly there's something in that. Then I'll tell you what," said Ukridge, never too proud to yield a point, "we'll make it a whisky-and-soda instead. Come along over to the Criterion."

IT was a few days after this that the Derby was run, and a horse of the name of Gunga Din finished third. This did not interest the great bulk of the intelligentsia to any marked extent, the animal having started at a hundred to three, but it meant much to me, for I had drawn his name in the sweepstake at my club. After a monotonous series of blanks stretching back to the first year of my membership, this seemed to me the outstanding event of the century, and I celebrated my triumph by an informal dinner to a few friends. It was some small consolation to me later to remember that I had wanted to include Ukridge in the party, but failed to get hold of him. Dark hours were to follow, but at least Ukridge did not go through them bursting with my meat.

There is no form of spiritual exaltation so poignant as that which comes from winning even a third prize in a sweepstake. So tremendous was the moral uplift that, when eleven o'clock arrived, it seemed silly to sit talking in a club and still sillier to go to bed. I suggested spaciously that we should all go off and dress and resume the revels at my expense half an hour later at Mario's, where, it being an extension night, there would be music and dancing till three. We scattered in cabs to our various homes.

How seldom in this life do we receive any premonition of impending disaster. I hummed a gay air as I entered the house in Ebury Street where I lodged, and not even the usually quelling sight of Bowles, my landlord, in the hall as I came in could quench my bonhomie. Generally a meeting with Bowles had the effect on me which the interior of a cathedral has on the devout, but to-night I was superior to this weakness.

"Ah, Bowles," I cried, chummily, only just stopping myself from adding "Honest fellow!" "Hullo, Bowles! I say, Bowles, I drew Gunga Din in the club sweep."

"Indeed, sir?"

"Yes. He came in third, you know."

"So I see by the evening paper, sir. I congratulate you."

"Thank you, Bowles, thank you."

"Mr. Ukridge called earlier in the evening, sir," said Bowles.

"Did he? Sorry I was out. I was trying to get hold of him. Did he want anything in particular?"

"Your dress-clothes, sir."

"My dress-clothes, eh?" I laughed genially. "Extraordinary fellow! You never know——" A ghastly thought smote me like a blow. A cold wind seemed to blow through the hall. "He didn't *get* them, did he?" I quavered.

"Why, yes, sir."

"Got my dress-clothes?" I muttered, thickly, clutching for support at the hat-stand.

"He said it would be all right, sir," said Bowles, with that sickening tolerance which he always exhibited for all that Ukridge said or did. One of the leading mysteries of my life was my landlord's amazing attitude towards this hell-hound. He fawned on the man. A splendid fellow like myself had to go about in a state of hushed reverence towards Bowles, while a human blot like Ukridge could bellow at him over the banisters without the slightest rebuke. It was one of those things which make one laugh cynically when people talk about the equality of man.

"He got my dress-clothes?" I mumbled.

"Mr. Ukridge said that he knew you would be glad to let him have them, as you would not be requiring them to-night."

"But I do require them, damn it!" I shouted, lost to all proper feeling. Never before had I let fall an oath in Bowles's presence. "I'm giving half-a-dozen men supper at Mario's in a quarter of an hour."

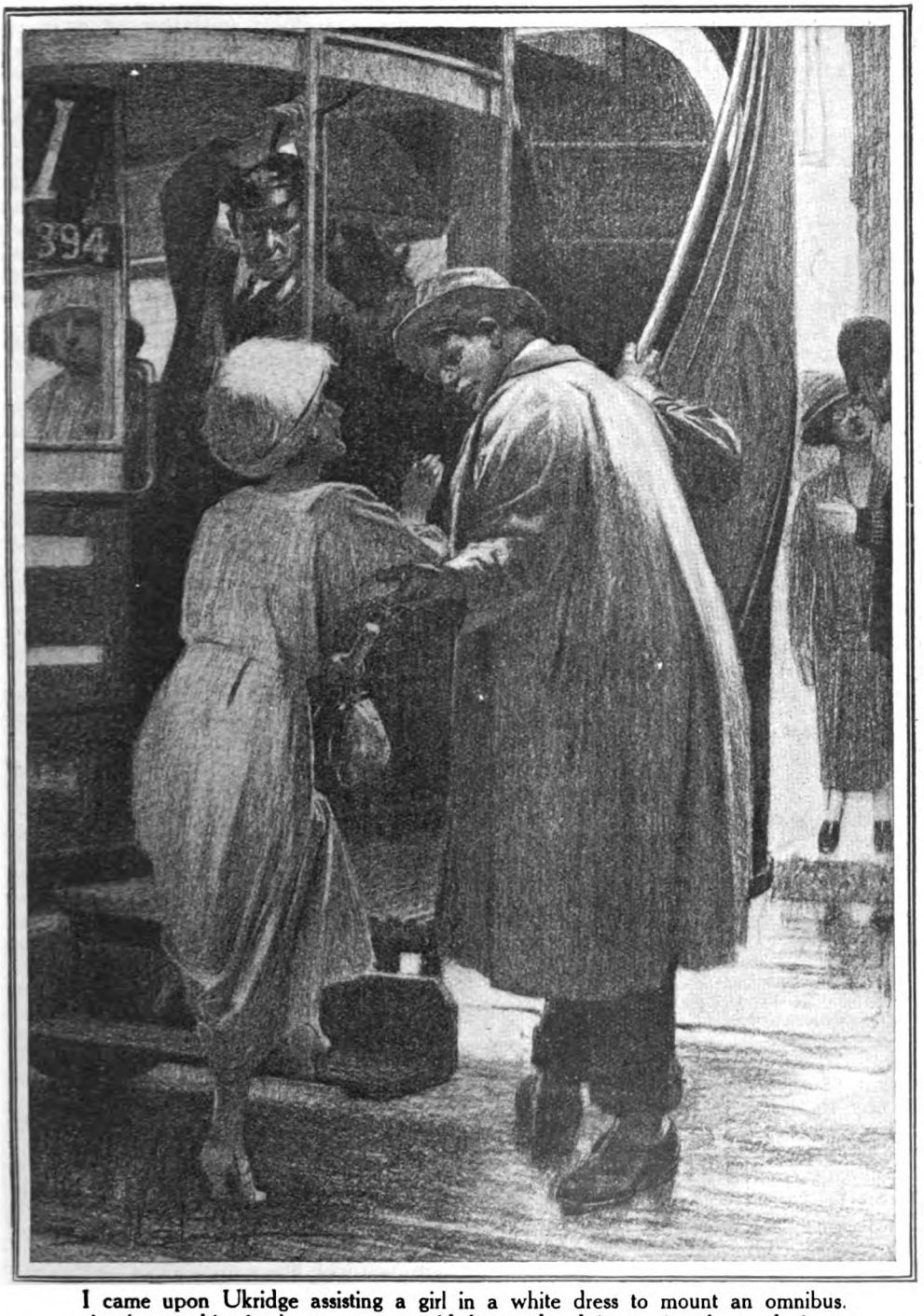
Bowles clicked his tongue sympathetically.

"What am I going to do?"

"Perhaps if you would allow me to lend you mine, sir?"

"Yours?"

"I have a very nice suit. It was given to me by his lordship the late Earl of Oxted, in whose employment I was for many years. I fancy it would do very well on you, sir. His lordship was about your height, though



I came upon Ukridge assisting a girl in a white dress to mount an omnibus. As far as this simple ceremony could be rendered impressive, he made it so.

perhaps a little slenderer. Shall I fetch it, sir ? I have it in a trunk downstairs."

The obligations of hospitality are sacred. In fifteen minutes' time six jovial men would be assembling at Mario's, and what would they do, lacking a host ? I nodded feebly.

" It's very kind of you," I managed to say.

" Not at all, sir. It is a pleasure."

If he was speaking the truth, I was glad of it. It is nice to think that the affair brought pleasure to someone.

That the late Earl of Oxted had indeed been a somewhat slenderer man than myself became manifest to me from the first pulling on of the trousers. Hitherto I had always admired the slim, small-boned type of aristocrat, but it was not long before I was wishing that Bowles had been in the employment of someone who had gone in a little more heartily for starchy foods. And I regretted, moreover, that the fashion of wearing a velvet collar on an evening coat, if it had to come in at all, had not lasted a few years longer. Dim as the light in my bedroom was, it was strong enough to make me wince as I looked in the mirror.

And I was aware of a curious odour.

" Isn't this room a trifle stuffy, Bowles ? "

" No, sir. I think not."

" Don't you notice an odd smell ? "

" No, sir. But I have a somewhat heavy cold. If you are ready, sir, I will call a cab."

MOTH-BALLS ! That was the scent I had detected. It swept upon me like a wave in the cab. It accompanied me like a fog all the way to Mario's, and burst out in its full fragrance when I entered the place and removed my overcoat. The cloak-room waiter sniffed in a startled way as he gave me my check, one or two people standing near hastened to remove themselves from my immediate neighbourhood, and my friends, when I joined them, expressed themselves with friend-like candour. With a solid unanimity they told me frankly that it was only the fact that I was paying for the supper that enabled them to tolerate my presence.

The leper-like feeling induced by this uncharitable attitude caused me after the conclusion of the meal to withdraw to the balcony to smoke in solitude. My guests were dancing merrily, but such pleasures were not for me. Besides, my velvet collar had already excited ribald comment, and I am a sensitive man. Crouched in a lonely corner of the balcony, surrounded by the outcasts who were not allowed on the lower floor because they were not dressed, I chewed a cigar and watched the revels with a jaundiced eye. The space reserved for dancing was crowded, and couples either revolved warily or ruthlessly bumped a passage for themselves, using their partners as battering-rams. Prominent among the ruthless bumpers was a big man who was giving a realistic imitation of a steam-plough. He danced strongly and energetically, and when he struck the line, something had to give.

From the very first, something about this man had seemed familiar ; but owing to his peculiar crouching manner of dancing, which he seemed to have modelled on the ring-style of Mr. James J. Jeffries, it was not immediately that I was able to see his face. But presently, as the music stopped and he straightened himself to clap his hands for an encore, his foul features were revealed to me.

It was Ukridge. Ukridge, confound him, with my dress-clothes fitting him so perfectly and with such unwrinkled smoothness that he might have stepped straight out of one of Ouida's novels. Until that moment I had never fully realized the meaning of the expression " faultless evening dress." With a passionate cry I leaped from my seat, and accompanied by a rich smell of camphor bounded for the stairs. Like Hamlet on a less impressive occasion, I wanted to slay this man when he was full of bread, with all his crimes broad-blown, as flush as May, at drinking, swearing, or about some act that had no relish of salvation in it.

" But, laddie," said Ukridge, backed into a corner of the lobby apart from the throng, " be reasonable."

I cleansed my bosom of a good deal of that perilous stuff that weighs upon the heart.

" How could I guess that you would want the things ? Look at it from my position, old horse. I knew you, laddie, a good true friend who would be delighted to lend a pal his dress-clothes any time when he didn't need them himself, and as you weren't there when I called I couldn't ask you, so I naturally simply borrowed them. It was all just one of those little misunderstandings which can't be helped. And, as it luckily turns out, you had a spare suit, so everything was all right, after all."

" You don't think this poisonous fancy dress is mine, do you ? "

" Isn't it ? " said Ukridge, astonished.

" It belongs to Bowles. He lent it to me."

" And most extraordinarily well you look in it, laddie," said Ukridge. " Upon my Sam, you look like a duke or something."

" And smell like a second-hand clothes-store."

" Nonsense, my dear old son, nonsense. A mere faint suggestion of some rather pleasant antiseptic. Nothing more. I like it. It's invigorating. Honestly, old man, it's really remarkable what an air that suit

gives you. Distinguished. That's the word I was searching for. You look distinguished. All the girls are saying so. When you came in just now to speak to me, I heard one of them whisper 'Who is it?' That shows you."

"More likely 'What is it?'"

"Ha, ha!" bellowed Ukridge, seeking to cajole me with sycophantic mirth. "Dashed good! Deuced good! Not 'Who is it?' but 'What is it?' It beats me how you think of these things. Golly, if I had a brain like yours—— But now, old son, if you don't mind, I really must be getting back to poor little Dora. She'll be wondering what has become of me."

The significance of these words had the effect of making me forget my just wrath for a moment.

"Are you here with that girl you took to the theatre the other afternoon?"

"Yes. I happened to win a trifle on the Derby, so I thought it would be the decent thing to ask her out for an evening's pleasure. Hers is a grey life."

"It must be, seeing you so much."

"A little personal, old horse," said Ukridge reprovingly. "A trifle bitter. But I know you don't mean it. Yours is a heart of gold really. If I've said that once, I've said it a hundred times. Always saying it. Rugged exterior but heart of gold. My very words. Well, good-bye for the present, laddie. I'll look in to-morrow and return these things. I'm sorry there was any misunderstanding about them, but it makes up for everything, doesn't it, to feel that you've helped brighten life for a poor little downtrodden thing who has few pleasures."

"Just one last word," I said. "One final remark."

"Yes?"

"I'm sitting in that corner of the balcony over there," I said. "I mention the fact so that you can look out for yourself. If you come dancing underneath there, I shall drop a plate on you. And if it kills you, so much the better. I'm a poor downtrodden little thing and I have few pleasures."

OWING to a mawkish respect for the conventions, for which I reproach myself, I did not actually perform this service to humanity. With the exception of throwing a roll at him—which missed him but most fortunately hit the member of my supper-party who had sniffed with the most noticeable offensiveness at my camphorated costume—I took no punitive measures against Ukridge that night. But his demeanour, when he called at my rooms next day, could not have been more crushed if I had dropped a pound of lead on him. He strode into my sitting-room with the sombre tread of the man who in a conflict with Fate has received the loser's end. I had been passing in my mind a number of good snappy things to say to him, but his appearance touched me to such an extent that I held them in. To abuse this man would have been like dancing on a tomb.

"For Heaven's sake what's the matter?" I asked. "You look like a toad under the harrow."

He sat down creakingly, and lit one of my cigars.

"Poor little Dora!"

"What about her?"

"She's got the push!"

"The push? From your aunt's, do you mean?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

Ukridge sighed heavily.

"Most unfortunate business, old horse, and largely my fault. I thought the whole thing was perfectly safe. You see, my aunt goes to bed at half-past ten every night, so it seemed to me that if Dora slipped out at eleven and left a window open behind her she could sneak back all right when we got home from Mario's. But what happened? Some dashed officious ass," said Ukridge, with honest wrath, "went and locked the damned window. I don't know who it was. I suspect the butler. He has a nasty habit of going round the place late at night and shutting things. Upon my Sam, it's a little hard! If only people would leave things alone and not go snooping about——"

"What happened?"

"Why, it was the scullery window which we'd left open, and when we got back at four o'clock this morning the infernal thing was shut as tight as an egg. Things looked pretty rocky, but Dora remembered that her bedroom window was always open, so we bucked up again for a bit. Her room's on the second floor, but I knew where there was a ladder, so I went and got it, and she was just hopping up as merry as dammit when somebody flashed a great beastly lantern on us, and there was a policeman, wanting to know what the game was. The whole trouble with the police force of London, laddie, the thing that makes them a hissing and a byword, is that they're snoopers to a man. Zeal, I suppose they call it. Why they can't attend to their own affairs is more than I can understand. Dozens of murders going on all the time, probably, all over Wimbledon, and all this bloke would do was stand and wiggle his infernal lantern and ask what the game was. Wouldn't be satisfied with a plain statement that it was all right. Insisted on rousing the house to have us identified."

Ukridge paused, a reminiscent look of pain on his expressive face.

"And then?" I said.

"We were," said Ukridge, briefly.

"What?"

"Identified. By my aunt. In a dressing-gown and a revolver. And the long and the short of it is, old man, that poor little Dora has got the sack."

I could not find it in my heart to blame his aunt for what he evidently considered a high-handed and tyrannical outrage. If I were a maiden lady of regular views, I should relieve myself of the services of any secretary-companion who returned to roost only a few short hours in advance of the milk. But, as Ukridge plainly desired sympathy rather than an austere pronouncement on the relations of employer and employed, I threw him a couple of tuts, which seemed to soothe him a little. He turned to the practical side of the matter.

"What's to be done?"

"I don't see what you can do."

"But I must do something. I've lost the poor little thing her job, and I must try to get it back. It's a rotten sort of job, but it's her bread and butter. Do you think George Tupper would biff round and have a chat with my aunt, if I asked him?"

"I suppose he would. He's the best-hearted man in the world. But I doubt if he'll be able to do much."

"Nonsense, laddie," said Ukridge, his unconquerable optimism rising bravely from the depths. "I have the utmost confidence in old Tuppy. A man in a million. And he's such a dashed respectable sort of bloke that he might have her jumping through hoops and shamming dead before she knew what was happening to her. You never know. Yes, I'll try old Tuppy. I'll go and see him now."

"I should."

"Just lend me a trifle for a cab, old son, and I shall be able to get to the Foreign Office before one o'clock. I mean to say, even if nothing comes of it, I shall be able to get a lunch out of him. And I need refreshment, laddie, need it sorely. The whole business has shaken me very much."

IT was three days after this that, stirred by a pleasant scent of bacon and coffee, I hurried my dressing and, proceeding to my sitting-room, found that Ukridge had dropped in to take breakfast with me, as was often his companionable practice. He seemed thoroughly cheerful again, and was plying knife and fork briskly like the good trencherman he was.

"Morning, old horse," he said, agreeably.

"Good morning."

"Devilish good bacon, this. As good as I've ever bitten. Bowles is cooking you some more."

"That's nice. I'll have a cup of coffee, if you don't mind me making myself at home while I'm waiting." I started to open the letters by my plate, and became aware that my guest was eyeing me with a stare of intense penetration through his pince-nez, which were all crooked as usual. "What's the matter?"

"Matter?"

"Why," I said, "are you looking at me like a fish with lung-trouble?"

"Was I?" He took a sip of coffee with an overdone carelessness. "Matter of fact, old son, I was rather interested. I see you've had a letter from my aunt."

"What?"

I had picked up the last envelope. It was addressed in a strong female hand, strange to me. I now tore it open. It was even as Ukridge had said. Dated the previous day and headed "Heath House, Wimbledon Common," the letter ran as follows:—

Dear Sir,—I shall be happy to see you if you will call at this address the day after to-morrow (Friday) at four-thirty.—Yours faithfully, Julia Ukridge.

I could make nothing of this. My morning mail, whether pleasant or the reverse, whether bringing a bill from a tradesman or a cheque from an editor, had had till now the uniform quality of being plain, straightforward, and easy to understand; but this communication baffled me. How Ukridge's aunt had become aware of my existence and why a call from me should ameliorate her lot were problems beyond my unravelling, and I brooded over it as an Egyptologist might over some newly-discovered hieroglyphic.

"What does she say?" inquired Ukridge.

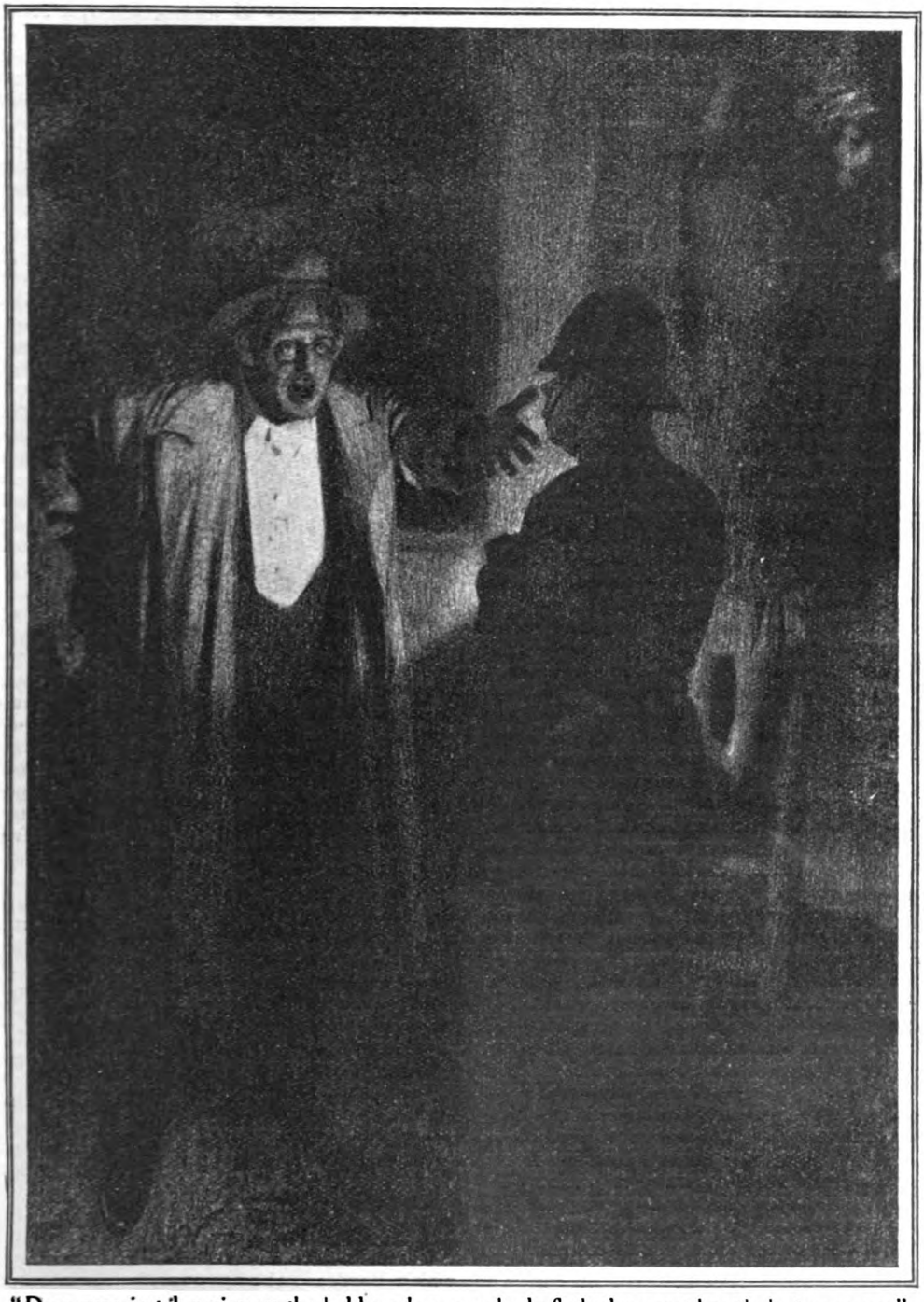
"She wants me to call at half-past four to-morrow afternoon."

"Splendid!" cried Ukridge. "I knew she would bite."

"What on earth are you talking about?"

Ukridge reached across the table and patted me affectionately on the shoulder. The movement involved the upsetting of a full cup of coffee, but I suppose he meant well. He sank back again in his chair and adjusted his pince-nez in order to get a better view of me. I seemed to fill him with honest joy, and he suddenly burst into a spirited eulogy, rather like some minstrel of old delivering an extempore boost of his chieftain and employer.

"Laddie," said Ukridge, "if there's one thing about you that I've always admired it's your readiness to help a pal. One of



"Dora was just hopping up the ladder when somebody flashed a great beastly lantern on us."

the most admirable qualities a bloke can possess, and nobody has it to a greater extent than you. You're practically unique in that way. I've had men come up to me and ask me about you. 'What sort of a chap is he?' they say. 'One of the very

best,' I reply. 'A fellow you can rely on. A man who would die rather than let you down. A bloke who would go through fire and water to do a pal a good turn. A bird with a heart of gold and a nature as true as steel.' "

" Yes, I'm a splendid fellow," I agreed, slightly perplexed by this panegyric. " Get on."

" I am getting on, old horse," said Ukridge with faint reproach. " What I'm trying to say is that I knew you would be delighted to tackle this little job for me. It wasn't necessary to ask you. I *knew*."

A GRIM foreboding of an awful doom crept over me, as it had done so often before in my association with Ukridge.

" Will you kindly tell me what damned thing you've let me in for now ? "

Ukridge deprecated my warmth with a wave of his fork. He spoke soothingly and with a winning persuasiveness. He practically cooed.

" It's nothing, laddie. Practically nothing. Just a simple little act of kindness which you will thank me for putting in your way. It's like this. As I ought to have foreseen from the first, that ass Tuppy proved a broken reed. In that matter of Dora, you know. Got no result whatever. He went to see my aunt the day before yesterday, and asked her to take Dora on again, and she gave him the miss-in-baulk. I'm not surprised. I never had any confidence in Tuppy. It was a mistake ever sending him. It's no good trying frontal attack in a delicate business like this. What you need is strategy. You want to think what is the enemy's weak side and then attack from that angle. Now, what is my aunt's weak side, laddie ? Her weak side, what is it ? Now think. Reflect, old horse."

" From the sound of her voice, the only time I ever got near her, I should say she hadn't one."

" That's where you make your error, old son. Butter her up about her beastly novels, and a child could eat out of her hand. When Tuppy let me down I just lit a pipe and had a good think. And then suddenly I got it. I went to a pal of mine, a thorough sportsman—you don't know him. I must introduce you some day—and he wrote my aunt a letter from you, asking if you could come and interview her for *Woman's Sphere*. It's a weekly paper, which I happen to know she takes in regularly. Now, listen, laddie. Don't interrupt for a moment. I want you to get the devilish shrewdness of this. You go and interview her, and she's all over you. Tickled to death. Of course, you'll have to do a good deal of Young Disciple stuff, but you won't mind that. After you've soft-soaped her till she's purring like a dynamo, you get up to go. ' Well,' you say, ' this has been the proudest occasion of my life, meeting one whose work I have so long admired.' And she says, ' The pleasure is mine, old horse.' And you slop over each other a bit more. Then you say sort of casually, as if it had just occurred to you, ' Oh, by the way, I believe my cousin—or sister—— No, better make it cousin—I believe my cousin, Miss Dora Mason, is your secretary, isn't she ? ' ' She isn't any such dam' thing,' replies my aunt. ' I sacked her three days ago.' That's your cue, laddie. Your face falls, you register concern, you're frightfully cut up. You start in to ask her to let Dora come back And you're such pals by this time that she can refuse you nothing. And there you are ! My dear old son, you can take it from me that if you only keep your head and do the Young Disciple stuff properly the thing can't fail. It's an iron-clad scheme. There isn't a flaw in it."

" There is one."

" I think you're wrong. I've gone over the thing very carefully. What is it ? "

" The flaw is that I'm not going anywhere near your infernal aunt. So you can trot back to your forger chum and tell him he's wasted a good sheet of letter-paper."

A pair of pince-nez tinkled into a plate. Two pained eyes blinked at me across the table. Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge was wounded to the quick.

" You don't mean to say you're backing out ? " he said, in a low, quivering voice.

" I never was in."

" Laddie," said Ukridge, weightily, resting an elbow on his last slice of bacon, " I want to ask you one question. Just one simple question. Have you ever let me down ? Has there been one occasion in our long friendship when I have relied upon you and been deceived ? Not one ! "

" Everything's got to have a beginning. I'm starting now."

" But think of her. Dora ! Poor little Dora. Think of poor little Dora."

" If this business teaches her to keep away from you, it will be a blessing in the end."

" But, laddie—— "

I suppose there is some fatal weakness in my character, or else the brand of bacon which Bowles cooked possessed a peculiarly mellowing quality. All I know is that, after being adamant for a good ten minutes, I finished breakfast committed to a task from which my soul revolted. After all, as Ukridge said, it was rough on the girl. Chivalry is chivalry. We must strive to

lend a helping hand as we go through this world of ours, and all that sort of thing. Four o'clock on the following afternoon found me entering a cab and giving the driver the address of Heath House, Wimbledon Common.

MY emotions on entering Heath House were such as I would have felt had I been keeping a tryst with a dentist who by some strange freak happened also to be a duke. From the moment when a butler of super-Bowles dignity opened the door and, after regarding me with ill-concealed dislike, started to conduct me down a long hall, I was in the grip of both fear and humility. Heath House is one of the stately homes of Wimbledon; how beautiful they stand, as the poet says: and after the humble drabness of Ebury Street it frankly overawed me. Its keynote was an extreme neatness which seemed to sneer at my squashy collar and reproach my baggy trouser-leg. The farther I penetrated over the polished floor, the more vividly was it brought home to me that I was one of the submerged tenth and could have done with a hair-cut. I had not been aware when I left home that my hair was unusually long, but now I seemed to be festooned by a matted and offensive growth. A patch on my left shoe which had had a rather comfortable look in Ebury Street stood out like a blot on the landscape. No, I was not at my ease; and when I reflected that in a few moments I was to meet Ukridge's aunt, that legendary figure, face to face, a sort of wistful admiration filled me for the beauty of the nature of one who would go through all this to help a girl he had never even met. There was no doubt about it—the facts spoke for themselves—I was one of the finest fellows I had ever known. Nevertheless, there was no getting away from it, my trousers did bag at the knee.

"Mr. Corcoran," announced the butler, opening the drawing-room door. He spoke with just that intonation of voice that seemed to disclaim all responsibility. If I had an appointment, he intimated, it was his duty, however repulsive, to show me in; but, that done, he disassociated himself entirely from the whole affair.

There were two women and six Pekingese dogs in the room. The Pekes I had met before, during their brief undergraduate days at Ukridge's dog college, but they did not appear to recognize me. The occasion when they had lunched at my expense seemed to have passed from their minds. One by one they came up, sniffed, and then moved away as if my bouquet had disappointed them. They gave the impression that they saw eye to eye with the butler in his estimate of the young visitor. I was left to face the two women.

Of these—reading from right to left—one was a tall, angular, hawk-faced female with a stony eye. The other, to whom I gave but a passing glance at the moment, was small and, so it seemed to me, pleasant-looking. She had bright hair faintly powdered with grey and mild eyes of a china blue. She reminded me of the better class of cat. I took her to be some casual caller who had looked in for a cup of tea. It was the hawk on whom I riveted my attention. She was looking at me with a piercing and unpleasant stare, and I thought how exactly she resembled the picture I had formed of her in my mind from Ukridge's conversation.

"Miss Ukridge?" I said, sliding on a rug towards her and feeling like some novice whose manager, against his personal wishes, has fixed him up with a match with the heavyweight champion.

"I am Miss Ukridge," said the other woman. "Miss Watterson, Mr. Corcoran."

It was a shock, but, the moment of surprise over, I began to feel something approaching mental comfort for the first time since I had entered this house of slippery rugs and supercilious butlers. Somehow I had got the impression from Ukridge that his aunt was a sort of stage aunt, all stiff satin and raised eyebrows. This half-portion with the mild blue eyes I felt that I could tackle. It passed my comprehension why Ukridge should ever have found her intimidating.

"I hope you will not mind if we have our little talk before Miss Watterson," she said with a charming smile. "She has come to arrange the details of the Pen and Ink Club dance which we are giving shortly. She will keep quite quiet and not interrupt. You don't mind?"

"Not at all, not at all," I said in my attractive way. It is not exaggerating to say that at this moment I felt debonair. "Not at all, not at all. Oh, not at all."

"Won't you sit down?"

"Thank you, thank you."

The hawk moved over to the window, leaving us to ourselves.

"Now we are quite cosy," said Ukridge's aunt.

"Yes, yes," I agreed. Dash it, I liked this woman.

"Tell me, Mr. Corcoran," said Ukridge's aunt, "are you on the staff of *Woman's Sphere?* It is one of my favourite papers. I read it every week."

"The outside staff."

"What do you mean by the outside staff?"

"Well, I don't actually work in the

office, but the editor gives me occasional jobs."

"I see. Who is the editor now?"

I began to feel slightly less debonair. She was just making conversation, of course, to put me at my ease, but I wished she would stop asking me these questions. I searched desperately in my mind for a name—any name—but as usual on these occasions every name in the English language had passed from me.

"Of course. I remember now," said Ukridge's aunt, to my profound relief. "It's Mr. Jevons, isn't it? I met him one night at dinner."

"Jevons," I burbled. "That's right. Jevons."

"A tall man with a light moustache."

"Well, fairly tall," I said, judicially.

"And he sent you here to interview me?"

"Yes."

"Well, which of my novels do you wish me to talk about?"

I relaxed with a delightful sense of relief. I felt on solid ground at last. And then it suddenly came to me that Ukridge in his woollen-headed way had omitted to mention the name of a single one of this woman's books.

"Er—oh, all of them," I said, hurriedly.

"I see. My general literary work."

"Exactly," I said. My feeling towards her now was one of positive affection.

She leaned back in her chair with her finger-tips together, a pretty look of meditation on her face.

"Do you think it would interest the readers of *Woman's Sphere* to know which novel of mine is my own favourite?"

"I am sure it would."

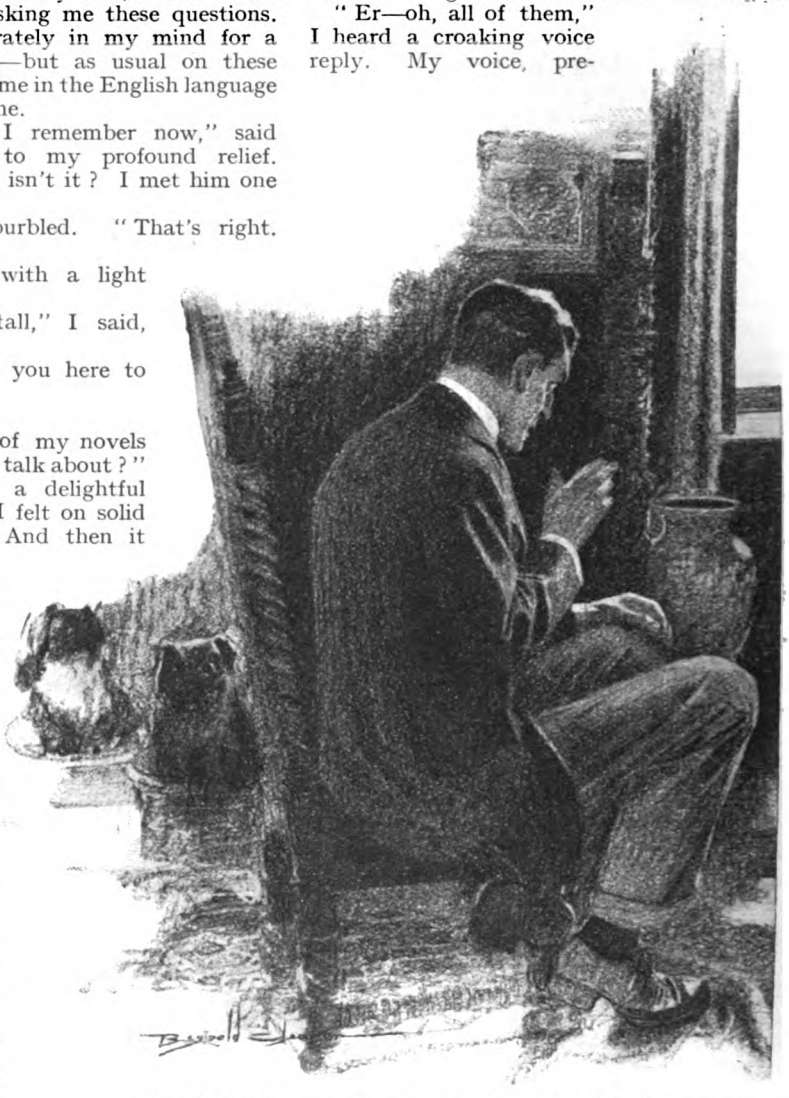
"Of course," said Ukridge's aunt, "it is not easy for an author to answer a question like that. You see, one has moods in which first one book and then another appeals to one."

"Quite," I replied. "Quite."

"Which of my books do *you* like best, Mr. Corcoran?"

There swept over me the trapped feeling one gets in nightmares. From six baskets the six Pekingese stared at me unwinkingly.

"Er—oh, all of them," I heard a croaking voice reply. My voice, presumably, though I did not recognize it.



"Which of my books do *you* like best, Mr. Corcoran?"
From six baskets the six Pekingese

"How delightful!" said Ukridge's aunt. "Now, I really do call that delightful. One or two of the critics have said that my work was uneven. It is so nice to meet someone who doesn't agree with them. Personally, I think my favourite is 'The Heart of Adelaide.'"

I nodded my approval of this sound choice. The muscles which had humped themselves stiffly on my back began to crawl back into place again. I found it possible to breathe.

There swept over me the trapped feeling one gets in nightmares. stared at me unwinkingly.

"Yes," I said, frowning thoughtfully, "I suppose 'The Heart of Adelaide' is the best thing you have written. It has such human appeal," I added, playing it safe.

"Have you read it, Mr. Corcoran?"

"Oh, yes."

"And you really enjoyed it?"

"Tremendously."

"You don't think it is a fair criticism to say that it is a little broad in parts?"

"Most unfair." I began to see my way. I do not know why, but I had been assuming that her novels must be the sort you find in seaside libraries. Evidently they belonged to the other class of female novels, the sort which libraries ban. "Of course," I said, "it is written honestly, fearlessly, and shows life as it is. But broad? No, no!"

"That scene in the conservatory?"

"Best thing in the book," I said, stoutly.

A pleased smile played about her mouth. Ukridge had been right. Praise her work, and a child could eat out of her hand. I found myself wishing that I had really read the thing, so that I could have gone into more detail and made her still happier.

"I'm so glad you like it," she said. "Really, it is most encouraging."

"Oh, no," I murmured, modestly.

"Oh, but it is. Because I have only just started to write it, you see. I finished chapter one this morning."

She was still smiling so engagingly that for a moment the full horror of these words did not penetrate my consciousness.

"'The Heart of Adelaide' is my next novel. The scene in the conservatory, which you like so much, comes towards the middle of it. I was not expecting to reach it till about the end of next month. How odd that you should know all about it!"

I had got it now all right, and it was like sitting down on the empty space where there should have been a chair. Somehow

the fact that she was so pleasant about it all served to deepen my discomfiture. In the course of an active life I have frequently felt a fool, but never such a fool as I felt then. The fearful woman had been playing with me, leading me on, watching me entangle myself like a fly on fly-paper. And suddenly I perceived that I had erred in thinking of her eyes as mild. A hard gleam had come into them. They were like a couple of blue gimlets. She looked like a cat that had caught a mouse, and it was revealed to me in one sickening age-long instant why Ukridge went in fear of her. There was that about her which would have intimidated the Sheik.

"It seems so odd, too," she tinkled on, "that you should have come to interview me for *Woman's Sphere*. Because they published an interview with me only the week before last. I thought it so strange that I rang up my friend Miss Watterson, who is the editress, and asked her if there had not been some mistake. And she said she had never heard of you. *Have* you ever heard of Mr. Corcoran, Muriel?"

"Never," said the hawk, fixing me with a revolted eye.

"How strange!" said Ukridge's aunt. "But then the whole thing is so strange. Oh, must you go, Mr. Corcoran?"

My mind was in a slightly chaotic condition, but on that one point it was crystal-clear. Yes, I must go. Through the door if I could find it—failing that, through the window. And anybody who tried to stop me would do well to have a care.

"You will remember me to Mr. Jevons when you see him, won't you?" said. Ukridge's aunt.

I was fumbling at the handle.

"And, Mr. Corcoran." She was still smiling amiably, but there had come into her voice a note like that which it had had on a certain memorable occasion when summoning Ukridge to his doom from the unseen interior of his Sheep's Cray cottage. "Will you please tell my nephew Stanley that I should be glad if he would send no more of his friends to see me. Good afternoon."

I suppose that at some point in the proceedings my hostess must have rung a bell, for out in the passage I found my old chum, the butler. With the uncanny telepathy of his species he appeared aware that I was leaving under what might be called a cloud, for his manner had taken on a warder-like grimness. His hand looked as if it was itching to grasp me by the shoulder, and when we reached the front door he eyed the pavement wistfully, as if thinking what a splendid spot it would be for me to hit with a thud.

"Nice day," I said, with the feverish instinct to babble which comes to strong men in their agony.

He scorned to reply, and as I tottered down the sunlit street I was conscious of his gaze following me.

"A very vicious specimen," I could fancy him saying. "And mainly due to my prudence and foresight that he hasn't got away with the spoons."

IT was a warm afternoon, but to such an extent had the recent happenings churned up my emotions that I walked the whole way back to Ebury Street with a rapidity which caused more languid pedestrians to regard me with a pitying contempt. Reaching my sitting-room in an advanced state of solubility and fatigue, I found Ukridge stretched upon the sofa.

"Hullo, laddie!" said Ukridge, reaching out a hand for the cooling drink that lay on the floor beside him. "I was wondering when you would show up. I wanted to tell you that it won't be necessary for you to go and see my aunt after all. It appears that Dora has a hundred quid tucked away in a bank, and she's been offered a partnership by a woman she knows who runs one of these typewriting places. I advised her to close with it. So she's all right."

He quaffed deeply of the bowl and breathed a contented sigh. There was a silence.

"When did you hear of this?" I asked at length.

"Yesterday afternoon," said Ukridge. "I meant to pop round and tell you, but somehow it slipped my mind."

(Next month: "The Return of Battling Billson.")

The Trimmer of the "Trebizond"

by

W. TOWNEND

ILLUSTRATED BY H. COLLER

THE donkeyman came into the *Trebizond's* engine-room from the stokehold, rubbing his hands on a piece of waste and smiling.

"You know that red-'aired trimmer, sir, Rawler?" he said.

The second engineer scowled.

"Rawler!" he said, testily. "What d'you want to ask fool questions like that for, eh?"

The donkeyman grinned.

"'E's gorn, sir!"

The second engineer cursed the absent Rawler fiercely.

"Damn it, donkey! We'll be leavin' in about a quarter of an hour! What's he playin' at?"

The third engineer came down the ladder from the middle platform.

"Hallo, Mr. Lachan, what's wrong now? You're lookin' sad!"

"Sad!" said the second engineer. "Sad! Here's that ruddy pickpocket, Rawler, skipped out, an' the stokehold hands hadn't sense enough to say a word till this minute. Well, I'll go tell the chief!"

The second engineer stepped out through the open doorway into the glare of the September afternoon.

The day was very hot. Beyond the other tramps, moored stern on to the breakwater

like the *Trebizond*, discharging cargo into lighters alongside, with winches rattling, and half-clad cargomen running barefooted with baskets of coal along the swaying planks to the railway trucks, the city of Genoa lay white and dazzling in the sunshine.

The second engineer halted near the bunker hatch, and all of a sudden he was furiously angry. He thrust his hands deep into his pockets and wondered by what miracle they could find a trimmer before they sailed.

"I beg your pardon, sir."

The second engineer turned quickly, and instead of one of the crew, as he had expected, he saw by his side a pale-faced, worried-looking little man who was a stranger to him.

"May I speak to you, sir?"

The second engineer frowned and for a moment did not answer him.

The little man stared at him, meekly, it seemed, yet it came over the second engineer suddenly that the man's eyes, pale blue eyes with small pupils, were not satisfied with inspecting his outward appearance but were probing into his innermost thoughts. He checked an inclination to resent this curious examination, dismissing it from his mind as being a mere fancy, and growled.

"Well, what is it you want?"

The answer came in a mournful, almost sorrowful, tone of voice.

"You want a trimmer, sir."

"Are you a trimmer?" he snapped.

Without a word the little man produced from the inside pocket of his shabby jacket a discharge book.

The second engineer took the book and read the name.

"'William Horace Smith,'" he said. "Is that it?"

The little man nodded.

"What's the matter? Eh, Mr. Lachan, what's the matter?"

The chief engineer had arrived from the captain's room. The second explained what had happened.

"H'm!" The chief grunted. "So Rawler's gone, has he? No so bad!"

He took the discharge book into his own hands and flipped the pages carelessly.

"All right, Mr. Lachan, mebbe you'd better get back to the engine-room. I'll deal with the matter myself."

The second engineer turned away.

"Have you got your sea-bag?" he heard the chief engineer say. "An' yer bed?"

"My bag, sir, but no bed."

"'ESES he's from Newcastle, but he ain't! I know he ain't!"

"How do yer know?"

"'Ooever 'eard a Geordie talk like 'im, eh?"

The firemen were talking about the trimmer. The conversation came clearly to Mr. Lachan as he passed, stooping, between the boilers.

"Don't believe he knows where he does come from! Don't believe he knows nothin'!"

The second engineer entered the stokehold.

The little trimmer who had taken the place of Rawler emerged from the starboard side bunker door and stood under the ventilator, gasping for breath.

The second engineer watched him curiously. There was, he felt, something strangely pitiable in his appearance. He seemed so small and helpless and out of place; so different from the other men, who, like himself, had turned to watch him: and yet he was no weakling. His shoulders were good, his bare arms were muscular.

"Well, Smith," said the second engineer, "how are you?"

And once again it flashed into his mind that the trimmer's pale eyes were searching deep into his thoughts.

The little man had not answered.

"Don't you know your own name, Smith?"

Frawdell, one of the two firemen on watch, a big, broad-chested man, with a bristly black moustache and bad eyes and a big chin, marked with a diagonal purple scar, a man whom the second detested, went up to the trimmer and gave him a dig in the ribs with his fist.

"Wake up! You're dopey!"

The trimmer blinked, as though in actual truth the fireman had guessed his secret.

"I beg your pardon, sir," he said, in his soft voice. "Were you speaking to me, sir?"

The two firemen roared. Splendid! What would he say next?

"Ever been to sea before?" Mr. Lachan asked.

There came into the trimmer's eyes a sudden look of consternation. He put his hand to his mouth and tapped his fingers on his lower lip and grinned feebly.

"How else could I be here, sir, if I hadn't?" he said.

Mr. Lachan considered. The man was right! How else could he be in the *Trebizond's* bunkers, unless he had been to sea before?

"What were you doin' in Genoa?"

"I came across from Philadelphia, sir, in the *Joanna*, sir, and fell sick and couldn't complete the voyage." His face broke into a smile. "It's all down in the discharge book, sir."

THOUGH Smith was not a strong man, nevertheless by some strange output of energy from some hidden source he managed, day after day, to keep the two firemen of his watch, Chaymore and Frawdell, supplied with coal.

In the fo'c'sle the hands gave as much time to asking him questions and considering his answers as though he had been supplied for their special amusement to relieve the tedium of the voyage. They were like children examining some new toy.

Smith did not know, apparently—this was the cream of the jest—that they were making fun of him. He would sit and listen to their questions with an air of patience, his pale eyes staring into space, a little smile on his lips.

Frawdell, the big fireman, was particularly amused. He invented for Smith a fictitious set of female relations: two or three wives in different parts of the world; cousins, aunts, and sisters; and would demand intimate details of their lives that would have been met by any of the other men with a drive in the stomach with a hobnailed boot. Smith, however, made no protest. Frawdell, he would say, was mistaken: he had no sister, or no wife; but even as he answered there was in his face such a curiously bewildered expression, as though he were asking himself could Frawdell possibly be right, that he became more of a mystery and more of a joke than ever.

Gradually the men accepted him as one of themselves: a freak, perhaps, but harmless, and too good-natured to be really funny. Frawdell, alone, continued to torment him. Never before had a man like Smith come within reach. He was soft. That the trimmer showed no resentment at his obscenities goaded him to fresh efforts. His amusement at Smith's stupidity gave way to hate. He took a delight in making him miserable. He detested the little man so much that he felt an impulse within him stirring him on to physical violence; words made no impression on the trimmer's mind; therefore he would see what he could do with blows and sly kicks on the ankle and trips in the dark.

One night the second engineer came into the stokehold when Frawdell and Chaymore were arguing.

"You oughter leave him alone, Fred!" said Chaymore. "It ain't fair!"

"Huh! I'll boot the grease out of the little beast before I'm done with him. You see!"

Mr. Lachan stood staring at Frawdell.

"Who are you talkin' about?" he growled.

Frawdell growled back that he warn't talkin' about no one.

"Smith, wasn't it?" said Mr. Lachan. "I'm not deaf an' I'm not blind; it's gone far enough, d'you hear? He's not a strong man or a big man, but he's doin' his work all right, an' that's more than I can say about you! You lay off hazin' him, or I'll just about knock your teeth down your throat! See!"

And there was something in the second engineer's tone of voice and his scowl that sent a cold shiver down Frawdell's spine.

The second engineer watched him for a moment, then he took a colza oil lamp and made his way into the bunkers.

Smith was shovelling coal into a barrow, working slowly, steadily, clumsily, using his shovel so as to ensure the maximum amount of effort.

All at once he straightened his back, dropped the shovel, and raised his arms.

"Oh, God! God! God!" He gave a little moan as though he were in deep pain, then he picked up his shovel once more and set to work furiously.

"Here," said the second, "you, Smith!" He clambered over the coal to where he worked. "Gimme that shovel! Now, you want to use it like this!" He drove the broad blade under a mound of coal and finished filling the barrow. "Make your back do the work for you! See! Not your arms!"

"Thank you, sir," said Smith. He seemed astounded at the simplicity of what the second engineer had shown him.

"Try it! Isn't it easier?"

"Why, yes, sir," said Smith.

"Funny you never learnt that before!" said the second engineer. "Dam' funny!"

THE *Trebizond* loaded copper ore at Huelva, in Spain, for New York. For two days after leaving port on the long run across the Western Ocean, Frawdell left Smith in peace. What Mr. Lachan had said had had an effect.

On the third night after leaving Huelva there was trouble in the firemen's fo'c'sle.

At one bell in the middle watch, a quarter to four, the stokehold hands for the morning watch were called.

Frawdell lay in his bunk, cursing sleepily. He turned over and yawned. Then he caught sight of Smith, who had already climbed out of his bunk and was almost dressed.

A sudden rage swept over him. Smith, putting his boots on; Smith, ready for work; Smith, with his sneaking, quiet ways and his queer eyes, looking at him!

"What the 'ell are you lookin' at me for, eh?" Frawdell growled.

Any excuse was, perhaps, better than none. Smith had looked at him!

He slid feet first out of his bunk, made a sudden dash at the trimmer, and, with the palm of his hand against his face, sent him reeling backward against the bogie. Then he tore the blankets and mattress out of the little man's bunk and hurled them at him as he sat where he had fallen.

Smith rose to his feet and began, methodically, to gather together his things.

To the other men Frawdell was all of a sudden a wild animal, so mad with rage that he had ceased to have any sense left. He glared at the trimmer, shook his fists at him, cursed him, and dared him to try his strength and get knocked stiff as a corpse.

The little man looked at him almost curiously, then, with a smile, stooped and picked up his bed.

"You'd better make haste," he said, "or it will be eight bells."

Frawdell's voice broke shrilly.

"What's it to do with you, eh? You dam' interferin' little snitch! Tell on me, would yer? I know yer! I know what yer are! Who was yer mother, eh? I know what she was, if you don't. You're no more'n a——"

Leaning forward, his hands on the table, his voice hushed to a low snarling whisper, Frawdell uttered the one deadly, unforgivable insult of the tramp fo'c'sle.

The little man blinked. His eyes had in them a strange earnestness. He looked at Frawdell as though he were something unclean.

"Frawdell," he said, "I wouldn't be you. You've said things. Evil brings evil. I'm sorry for you, Frawdell. To-night you'll be punished. And some day—in the future—in the future——" All of a sudden he looked frightened. He stooped once more and picked up a boot. "There's no future," he said.

"What does he mean?" said Frawdell. "What the—— 'Ark at him!"

But somehow his boisterousness had gone. He was dejected. His wish to batter the trimmer's pale, lined face went. The trimmer had threatened him. But with what? Evil brings evil. Rubbish! He shivered.

Two hours later, when raking out a furnace, a blazing mass of clinker, disturbed by his rake or the roll of the ship, flew out of the fire and fell on his bare forearm.

He howled with the pain. There was a smell of scorching flesh in the stokehold when the second engineer came in.

Frawdell was whimpering, holding his burnt arm, walking to and fro, stamping his feet in his agony.

"I'm burnt—burnt."

"Evil brings evil." The little trimmer spoke from the door that led to the bunker where he was working. "I warned you, Frawdell. Hell fire scorches, Frawdell. Like that!"

THE *Trebizond* pounded her way across the Western Ocean. In bad weather, as in good, the trimmer, Smith, did his work, methodically, unskilfully, persistently, uncomplaining, silent, and to all appearance very thoughtful.

He seldom spoke about his work or the ship, and never about himself. A more silent man had never been known.

And then—though who first whispered it no one knew—then the rumour spread: Smith was a murderer. He had killed—his wife, his sweetheart, his pal; and had fled from the police! Smith was a murderer! Smith, with the pale eyes that could see into a man's heart, had killed someone!

One afternoon toward the end of his four hours' watch Frawdell, his right forearm still bandaged, crept into the bunker where the trimmer was working by the light of his lamp, shovelling coal for dear life.

"'Ere, Smith!"

Smith whirled round swiftly and raised his shovel, as though prepared to strike should he be attacked.

"Orl right, chuck it!" said Frawdell, uneasily. "I wanter speak to yer."

The little man lowered the shovel.

"Remember that night when the clinkers burned me! Well, then, what'd yer mean when yer said that about the future—there was no future—eh?"

The trimmer stared at him blankly, his face horribly earnest in its mask of coal-dust, lit by the flickering slush lamp. He shook his head.

Not for worlds would Frawdell have said anything to any of the other firemen, but he was worried.

"I've a good mind to——" And there he stopped.

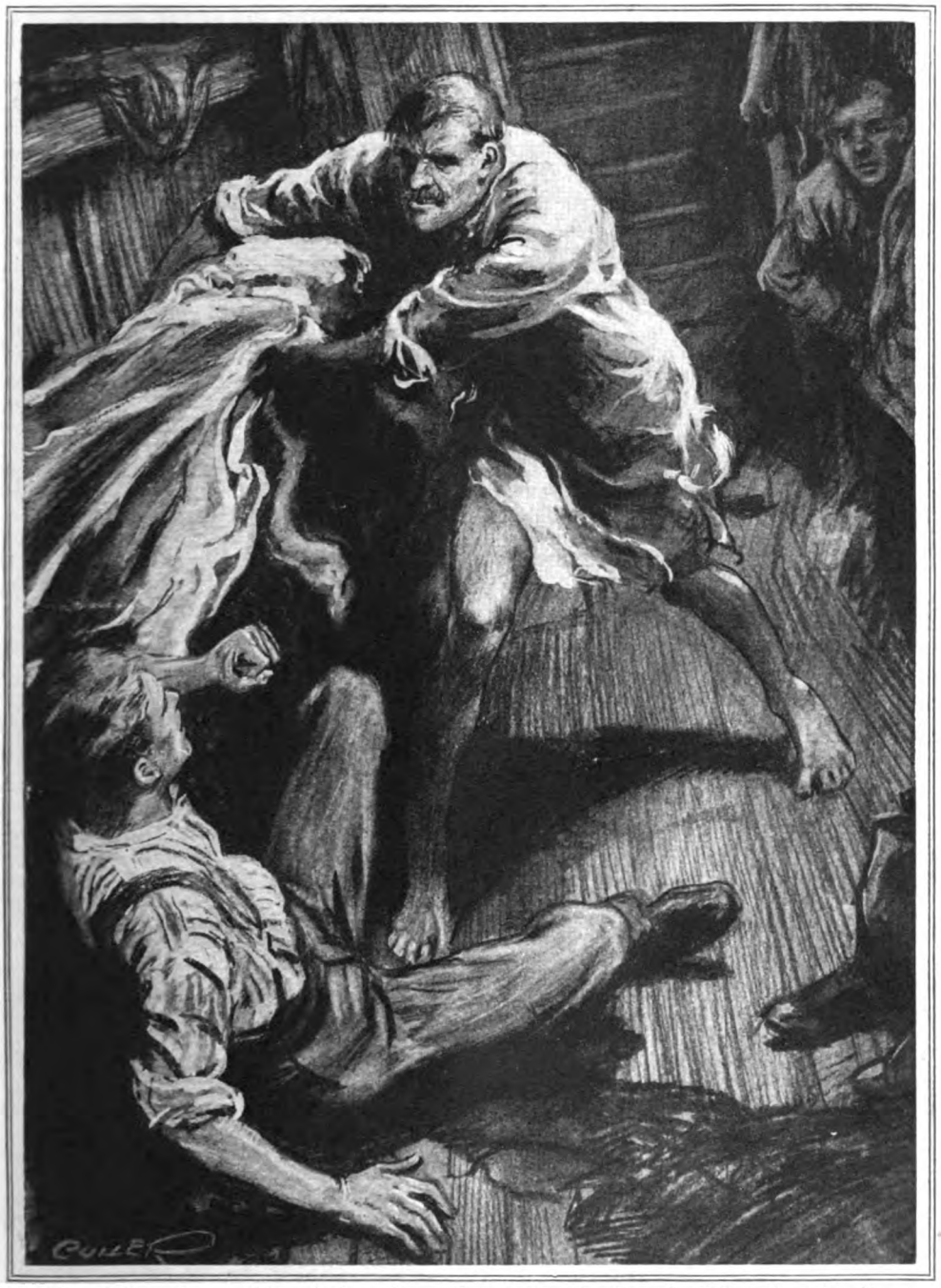
In New York he would leave the ship. He would take his discharge and go. He could, in the U.S.A., and he would. But that bit about the future—it worried him.

MR. LACHAN, the second engineer, a whole-hearted student of detective fiction, had come to regard Smith, the trimmer, as his own personal problem, to be solved somehow or other before the *Trebizond* reached home ports once more.

Again and again, in the mess-room or on the after well deck in the sunshine, before going down to his watch, the second engineer would talk of the trimmer.

The man was a mystery; what was he doing on board the *Trebizond?* Where had he come from?

"The man's crazy!" said the old chief. "A lunatic, escaped from an asylum."



Frawdell made a sudden dash and sent him reeling backward. Then he tore the blankets and mattress out of the little man's bunk and hurled them at him.

"No," said Mr. Lachan, "he's as sane as I am." There was a laugh. "Well, or as anyone else. He's clever. He's been better educated than any of us, I know. But there's something troubling him. That's what I can't understand. He's worried. He's a good little man, too. He doesn't smoke, an' he doesn't drink, an'——"

"Wait till we reach New York," said the chief, dryly. "It's amazin' the virtues you'll find in men when they're at sea, an' there's no temptations to tempt 'em from the strait an' narrow way."

On the second night that the ship lay in Erie Basin the second engineer went ashore with Mr. MacCorrance, the mate.

For a time they were content to drift aimlessly along, watching the people and the clanging surface cars and the motors, and the lights of Broadway.

And then the mate saw ahead of them, walking slowly, his hands in his pockets, a small, square-shouldered man, in a shabby blue suit and a soft hat.

"Look," said the mate, "isn't that your trimmer?"

"By gum," said Mr. Lachan, "it is!"

"Come on," said the mate, "now we'll see where he's bound for. Let's follow him."

Mr. Lachan wondered whether the little man had any idea where he was going or not. He walked in front of them, pausing at times and gazing into shop windows, unmoved by the clamorous life ebbing and flowing about him.

They reached a district of tall tenement houses, little fruit shops, cigar stands, grocery stores, sidewalks crowded with men and women and children, dark-skinned and happy and noisy, chattering away at the tops of their voices, laughing and gesticulating and screaming with excitement.

"We're back in Genoa," said the mate, suddenly. "Dagoes!"

Presently the little trimmer halted at the corner of a narrow alley and stood, apparently lost in thought.

"Look!" said the second engineer. "He's coming back."

And as he spoke there came from the open doorway the clatter of heavy feet running downstairs, and a young man, broad in the shoulder, bare-headed, without a jacket, burst out on to the sidewalk and darted off at a run.

Two little girls, not much more than babies, were approaching slowly, carrying, each of them, a bottle of milk.

The bareheaded young man, racing toward them, thrust out an arm and swept them out of his path. They fell, screaming, in the gutter. The bottles of milk were smashed.

"My God!" said the second engineer.

The trimmer had stooped suddenly and flung his arms around the young man's knees and had brought him down on top of him on the greasy sidewalk.

They struggled desperately, the young man trying to free himself from the trimmer.

"Look out for his knife!" yelled the mate.

Another man, also bareheaded, but elderly, stout, red in the face, bull-necked, came clattering out of the tenement. He saw the men on the sidewalk, struggling, and he shouted.

The young man whom the trimmer had brought down tore himself loose, spurred on, it seemed, by the roar of rage from the bull-necked man, jumped to his feet, trod heavily on the trimmer, and the bull-necked man caught him by the belt and, by some miracle, held him fast.

A shriek of excitement went up from the crowded street. People came flocking out of the doorways. Windows were thrown open. The young man and the bull-necked man were fighting. A woman was screaming from a grocery store. Knives flashed in the light of the arc lamps. The trimmer had risen to his feet and the second engineer forced his way through to him and grabbed him by the arm.

"You dam' fool, Smith, come away at once!"

The trimmer stared at them with a puzzled look. And then a sudden smile twitched his thin lips, and he patted the little girls on the cheeks and dug his hand into his pocket and gave them some coins.

Shouts from the crowd announced the arrival of the police.

"Come on!" said the mate. "First thing we know they'll grab us for witnesses!"

When they reached a quieter street the second engineer turned on the trimmer.

"What did you do that for, eh?"

"Do what, sir?" said the trimmer.

"Interfere with that dago!"

"A terrible city!" said the trimmer, without making any attempt to answer. "A terrible city! Cruel! Wicked! They were hurt!" He broke off with a sigh. "I think I'll go back to the ship, sir."

THE *Trebizond*, rolling persistently, plunged southward through heavy seas, past Hatteras, bound from Boston with a general cargo to Buenos Ayres.

Under the influence of a sufficient quantity of bad liquor to bring him to the verge of *delirium tremens*, Frawdell's fears had vanished. Why should he be afraid of what a miserable little toad like Smith had said? All ships were hell ships, of course, but the *Trebizond* suited him well enough! He'd be damned if he'd be driven away if he didn't want!

And so he was still on board when the ship left Boston.

One day in the forenoon watch the *Trebizond* sighted a three-masted schooner on the port bow, flying signals of distress. The *Trebizond* changed her course, and with the wind due astern steamed toward her. As she came up the schooner signalled that she was sinking, her sails had been lost, the

bulwarks were gone, the crew wished to be taken off at once.

The sea, though not heavy, was rising; great gusts of wind came from the north-west with showers of rain; the sky was dark.

The port lifeboat was lowered in charge of the second mate. As the men were struggling to pull clear of the ship, those left on board saw with horror the boat caught broadside on by a big sea and flung right over in a swirl of white foam.

Orders were shouted from the bridge, the telegraph clanged, there was a rush of men for the boat deck, level with the engine-room skylights, the *Trebizond* was brought round, and the starboard lifeboat, now on the lee side, screened from the force of the wind, was launched.

The men who had been thrown into the water were clinging to the capsized boat, all save one, who was swimming toward the ship.

Chaymore, who with Frawdell and Smith and the other stokehold hands not on watch stood on the bridge deck by the fiddley, was the first to see him.

"Look!" he shouted. "See that feller! That's Ginger! What's he playin' at?"

The carpenter came up with a heaving line in his hand. He tied one end around the rail and stood with the other men.

"We maun be ready to thraw the puir fella a rope," he said.

The third mate's boat was now very close to the men in the water. Seas were breaking over the schooner, which seemed to be settling deeper each minute. The man who was swimming, the deck hand, Ginger, was now near enough to the ship for the men on the bridge deck to see the expression in his face. He appeared to be tiring rapidly. Already his strokes were shorter and less powerful.

Smith tugged at Frawdell's sleeve. "Will he do it?" he asked. "Will he do it? Surely we're going to do something to help him!"

"Dry up!" Frawdell snapped. "Leggo my arm!" He cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted: "Come on, Ginger! That's the boy! Come on!"

But Ginger was finished. He gave a weak cry that carried to the *Trebizond's* deck and threw up his hands. Without a word, Smith took hold of the end of the coil of rope that the carpenter had tied to the rail and jumped into the sea.

His head came to the surface. A lifebuoy was hurled after him from the bridge. He swam steadily toward the drowning man, avoided his frenzied clutching, and tied the rope under his arms. He waved his hand, and the men on the bridge deck hauled Ginger aboard. Another rope was thrown, and the trimmer followed. He reached the deck apparently none the worse for his swim.

The trimmer walked slowly away. Chaymore followed him.

"Man," he said, "no one could have done nothin' better'n that. I'm proud of you, Smithy! Understand?"

They halted on the for'ard well-deck and stood by the bulwarks watching the starboard lifeboat, with the rescued men from the port lifeboat safe on board, returning. The distance was not great, as the *Trebizond* had been brought still nearer to the sinking schooner, but was still to windward, acting as a breakwater against the seas to make it easier for the men pulling at the oars.

"I wonder," said Smith, "if they'll be able to take those poor fellows off. It's terrible!"

His teeth chattered, though the day was warm. His face was grey. Water dripped from his clothes.

Ginger, the man he had saved, came limping down the ladder from the bridge deck.

"They give me a drink of rum," he said, blissfully. "Ah! ain't you had no rum, Smithy? You saved my life, Smithy! Go back an' say that you want some rum!"

The little man looked at him with such a wild expression in his face that the deck-hand was startled.

"Let me be!" said the trimmer. "Don't you know those men on the schooner maybe are drowning?"

He did not move from the for'ard well-deck until the *Trebizond* had been brought to leeward of the sinking schooner and her crew had been rescued and were safe on board.

AND now the trimmer of the *Trebizond* became more of a mystery than ever before.

No one attempted to understand his motives or his moods or temperament. He had proved himself brave. He had risked his life in order to save the life of a drowning man. And yet, to all appearance, nothing could have worried or tormented him more than that anyone should mention or refer to what he had done.

Even Frawdell, incapable of going against the tide of popular opinion, became almost effusive in his offers of friendship and his promises that as soon as they reached port he would take him ashore, him an' Chaymore, an' give him a good time.

And Smith would draw away from him and frown, and look at him from under his eyebrows and show in his expression contempt, indifference, anything save the wish to accept his friendship. And Frawdell,

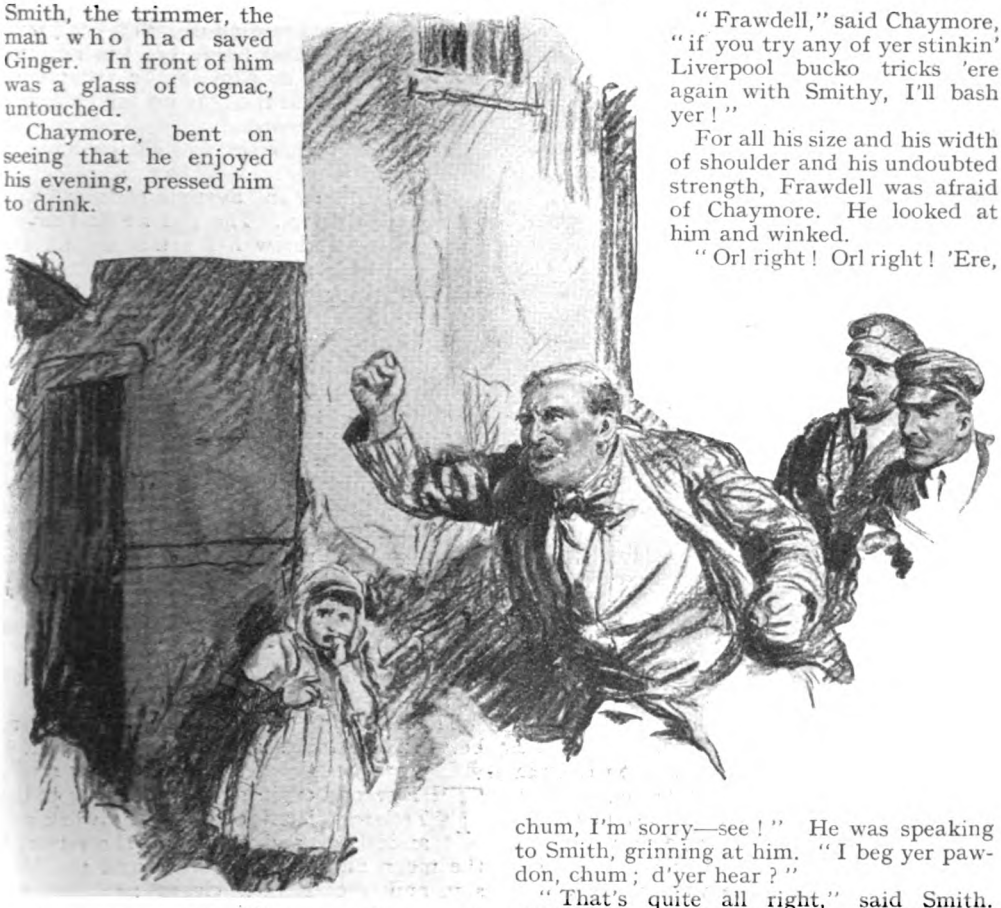
though he might pretend that he liked him, though he might talk in front of the others as though they were pals, Frawdell hated him from the depths of his black, distorted nature. He wanted to get his two hands around the trimmer's neck and choke the life out of him.

AT a table in a water-front *café* in Buenos Ayres, hot and noisy and crowded, the firemen of the *Trebizond* sat and drank luxuriously, deeply, of a fiery spirit that burnt the throat and set the blood tingling in their veins, and was sold as whisky and most certainly wasn't.

The trimmer had stooped suddenly and flung his arms around the young man's knees and brought him down.

To the firemen the dingy, low-roofed, uncomfortable room, that smelt of hot bodies and stale spirits and tobacco smoke, was for the time Paradise. The drink was nectar. The girls, dark Spanish girls, olive-tinted, coarse of feature and figure, blowsy, full-bosomed, who took their orders, brought them their drinks, laughed and talked with them loudly and shrilly in their strange water-front English, were wonderful, adorable creatures, perfect, the realities of their dreams.

Between Frawdell and Chaymore, silent, pale, his eyes glancing continually from side to side, as though he were puzzled, sat



Smith, the trimmer, the man who had saved Ginger. In front of him was a glass of cognac, untouched.

Chaymore, bent on seeing that he enjoyed his evening, pressed him to drink.

"Come on, Smithy, ol' bean! You ain't in the bunkers now, yer know! Have a good time! Drink hearty!"

Frawdell was openly contemptuous.

"Bring 'im in 'ere, an' 'e don't know what to do with 'isself! 'E makes me sick!"

The liquor was, as usual, having its effect on Frawdell. He glared at Chaymore, and then his coarse lips curled into a smile under his black moustache, revealing his sharp teeth, and a look of malice shot into his small eyes. He turned to Smith beside him and clapped a huge hand on his shoulder and shook him violently. "Drink, you frog-faced little pi-can! Drink, d'you 'ear? What d'yer think that you're doin' 'ere? Prayin'?" He snatched up the little man's glass, put a hand around his forehead and forced back his head, and poured some of the cognac down his mouth. The little man spluttered and spat out the liquor, and the firemen yelled.

Chaymore, however, was angry.

Smith wiped his wet face, apparently unmoved.

"Frawdell," said Chaymore, "if you try any of yer stinkin' Liverpool bucko tricks 'ere again with Smithy, I'll bash yer!"

For all his size and his width of shoulder and his undoubted strength, Frawdell was afraid of Chaymore. He looked at him and winked.

"Orl right! Orl right! 'Ere, chum, I'm sorry—see!" He was speaking to Smith, grinning at him. "I beg yer pawdon, chum; d'yer hear?"

"That's quite all right," said Smith. "Quite." But there was in the pale blue eyes, that seemed always to see so much more than there was to be seen upon the surface, a look that was strange and disquieting.

Chaymore was watching Frawdell anxiously. There was trouble ahead. That was the worst of Fred; give him a few drinks, put him within reach of a girl or two, and he was like a madman!

Smith was staring vacantly, with a dull expression in his face, across the room to where, in an open space on the floor between the crowded tables, men and girls were dancing to the music of a jangling piano played by an old man.

The atmosphere of the room was stifling. The noise was deafening. Men yelled at each other, clawed at the girls, upset their drinks, roared drunkenly. The fat proprietress, known as Isabella along the water-front, her heavy face so thickly powdered that at a distance she looked like a corpse dressed in a black silk gown, stormed in a furious *patois* of Spanish and English. Her anger was greeted with cheering.

A dark-haired girl, younger than most of Isabella's attendants, and by reason of her youth, and a certain freshness of complexion and manner, prettier and more alluring, approached the table where the *Trebizond's* firemen sat.

Frawdell leant across Smith and caught hold of her arm and dragged her toward him.

For some reason or other the girl resented his roughness.

She pulled herself free, her cheeks flaming.

"You—no goot!" she said. "You hurta me!" On her bare arm were red finger-marks.

"Pore li'l thing!" said Frawdell. "Is 'at't, eh? 'Ere, girlie, come 'ere an' I'll gi' yer kish to m-ma'k'up f'r'it! Come sit down!"

He reached forward and grabbed her once more.

"Now, you li'l hussy, si'down'n be-'ave!"

Some of the men were laughing, others were angry. What was the use of having a rough house as early as this! Did the fool want to be turned out or run in by the police, or what?

And then, as Frawdell and the girl were scuffling, and by now she was frightened, Smith rose to his feet, white and trembling, and with his eyes wide open, as though he had seen something almost too terrible to bear, and with greater strength than anyone had imagined he possessed, he seized the fireman by the wrist and arm, wrenched him away from the girl, and sent him reeling back against the wall, much as in the fo'c'sle Frawdell had sent him reeling backward over the bogie.

"You coward!" he said. "What do you think you are? I'm ashamed of you! I wish to God that men like you were wiped off the face of the earth! You're not fit to be at large among clean-minded men and women! You're a danger to humanity! A pest! It's your kind of vermin that drags mankind down to a level lower than the brute beasts of the field! That makes man accursed before God!"

The men stared at him in amazement. The words filled them with a sense of awe. He was not actually swearing, and yet it seemed as though he used language more terrible than they used themselves.

Frawdell had clenched his fists. He did not move. He seemed astounded. To those watching him curiously it was as though any attempt at asserting himself had been rendered impossible by what he had heard.

Chaymore was also standing.

"Fred," he said, "you chuck it! Smithy's right. Understand what I say!"

Dazed and dejected, and much too drunk to argue, Frawdell dropped back into his chair, breathing hard, his nostrils expanded, his face as pale as the trimmer's, so pale indeed that the scar on his chin was almost black by contrast.

Smith, still on his feet, was gazing blankly around the room.

Isabella, like an avenging fury, was sailing toward him. The girl he had saved from Frawdell threw her arms around his neck and gave him a kiss.

"Zank you," she said, simply. "I like you ver' moosh!"

The tension broke in a riot of applause.

"Got off at last! Oh, Smithy, I'm surprised at yer!"

Smith looked at the girl with alarm and fear in his eyes, and then—and this was the climax, the most terrible moment of a trying evening for Chaymore and the other firemen—they saw that he was weeping. He stood by the table with the broken glasses and the pools of liquor, tears streaming down his thin cheeks, his chest heaving; sobbing in the sight of the whole room!

Frawdell stumbled to his feet, yelling in derision.

"My Gord! Look at him, fellers! Look at him!"

The little man staggered, almost ran, between the tables and out of the door.

THE second engineer and the mate of the *Trebizond* leant over the bulwark rail amidships, and gazed at the city and the moon and the pale stars and the blue sky, and smoked their cigars and felt too peaceful and contented to talk.

And at last there floated across the dock eight clear strokes of a ship's bell.

"Time to turn in," said the second engineer. "Field day to-morrow. Lord, I'm sleepy!"

A small man came quickly along the quay and ran up the gangway. As he reached the deck he glanced suspiciously, as it were, around, and peered at the two officers.

"Good night, Smith!" said the second engineer.

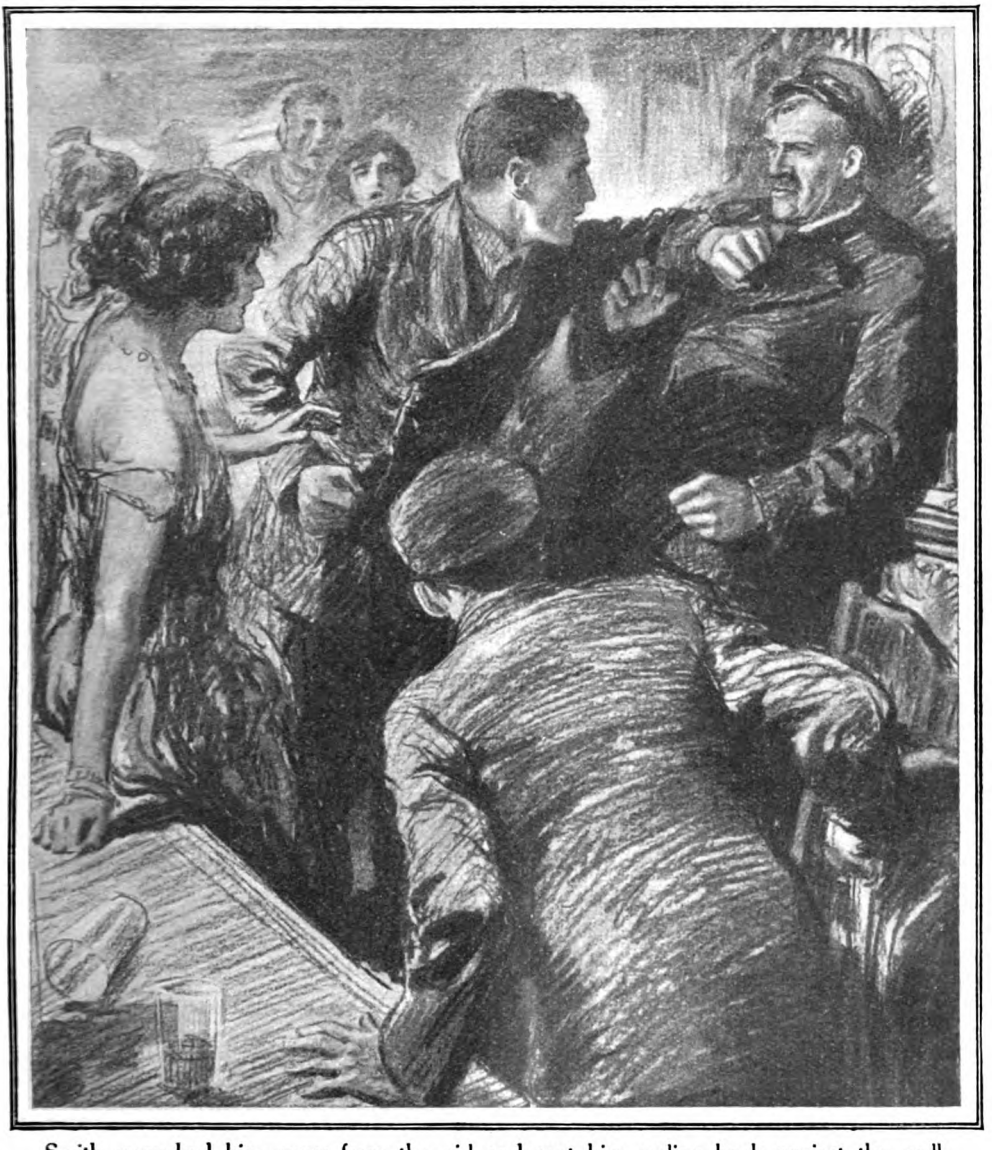
The little man passed without speaking.

Afterward the second engineer remembered the haggard look in his face, his pallor, his air of dejection; he seemed like a man who was suffering torments; he shuffled away, his head bent, his hands in his pockets.

"What's he been up to, eh?" said the mate.

"Dunno," said the second. "Been ashore for a change."

Presently they said good night and went to their rooms.



Smith wrenched him away from the girl and sent him reeling back against the wall.

A quarter of an hour passed. The second engineer, in his shirt and trousers, was stretched out on his settee, reading a magazine and smoking, when all of a sudden he heard heavy feet racing along the deck.

The feet came nearer. Whoever was running turned into the alley-way. There came a heavy pounding on the door of his room.

"Mr. Lachan! Mr. Lachan—sir! For Gord's sake, sir!"

The second engineer got from the settee and opened the door. In the alley-way stood old Nuthawl, clad in a shirt and a pair of shoes, his thin legs bare.

"Sir, Smith's gorn mad!"

"What's that? Smith how much?"

"Gorn mad, sir! Me an' Sarran, sir, was settin' in the fo'c'sle, gettin' ready to turn in, an' some o' the other fellers had just come aboard, sir, when all of a sudden, sir, Smith picks up the coal 'ammer, sir, an' throws it. Sarran ducked almost too late, sir, but 'e ain't hurt much. Smith, 'e slammed the door, sir, after us."

As the second engineer descended the ladder that led to the for'ard well deck, old

Nuthawl at his heels, he saw a group of men clustered around the No. 1 hatch in the moonlight. From inside the firemen's fo'c'sle there came the sound of hammering and the smashing of woodwork.

The mate came along the deck in pyjamas and uniform cap.

"What's all this about?" he said. He saw the second engineer. "Hallo, Mr. Lachan, what's the trouble?"

"That trimmer, Smith, Mr. MacCorrance. Seems to have gone off his head."

The mate went to the door.

"Smith!" he shouted. "Come out o' there at once!"

There was no reply. Apparently Smith was smashing up the bunks and barricading the door.

The captain and the chief engineer had arrived, and the second and third mates.

"Mr. MacCorrance," said the captain, glaring right and left, "what's the meaning of this disturbance?"

When he heard that one of the trimmers had suddenly gone mad, he strode to the door of the fo'c'sle and knocked angrily. "You inside! Open that door!"

From the fo'c'sle there came a chuckle of laughter.

"Too late, Satan! Too late!"

Red in the face, the captain turned to the chief.

"Mr. Livison, we'll have the steam on deck, please, at once. We'll turn the hose on him through a panel. We can't have this kind of thing. It's absurd. Pah!"

The only sound from the fo'c'sle now was the voice of the trimmer talking to himself and at times rising into a kind of sing-song chant.

Chaymore thought of telling the second engineer what had happened at Isabella's, and then he decided that he would wait, at least, until Frawdell returned on board.

The panel was broken in by the bos'n with the axe.

"Where's that hose?" said the mate.

And then as he looked over his shoulder toward the well deck a seven-pound jar of pickles came hurtling through the gap and smashed on the hatch coaming.

"Look out, sir!"

A razor flashed in the moonlight, just grazing the mate's cheek. Another razor followed.

The trimmer was shouting defiance, yelling at the top of his voice, madly, chanting that before he was dead he would kill! Before he was dead, he would kill!

After the razors came lumps of coal.

The nozzle of the hose was thrust through the broken panel and the water turned on. The madman gave a scream of rage. But in spite of the flood poured in on him he went on hurling coal.

There was a smashing of glass and the light vanished.

"Break open the door, bo'sn," said the captain, grimly. "I've had enough of this. Make haste!"

At length the doorway was clear. The hose still poured a fierce stream of water into the blackness of the fo'c'sle. The mate flashed an electric torch, and by the light the trimmer, silent now, was visible, crouching in the far corner.

And then, while they were hesitating, arguing, jostling each other, someone trod on the hose, and the stream of water was shut off. A yell came from the corner where the trimmer was crouching. He jumped to his feet and made a wild rush. The second mate, who was nearest the doorway, ran forward and hit him over the head with the windlass lever. The trimmer fell on his face, unconscious.

They carried him out on to the well deck. The second engineer approached and stared at him. The little man's face was like death. On his temple was a smear of blood where the second mate had hit him. His expression was more calm and peaceful than at any time during the voyage.

A doctor from a big steamer moored near the *Trebizond* came on board. He gave the trimmer a hypodermic, bound up the wound in his head, and said they would have to report the matter to the Port Health Authorities as soon as possible.

Four of the hands carried Smith to the wheel-house, where he was tied, hand and foot, to the wooden grating. Here he was left in the charge of Chaymore.

IN the morning the second engineer went up to the wheel-house.

Smith still lay stretched out on the grating.

"He ain't moved, sir, all night," said Chaymore.

Smith opened his eyes. He stared at the second engineer for a moment and then looked at Chaymore and closed his eyes with a little sigh.

"I'm dead," he whispered.

Later on in the morning Smith was taken ashore to hospital. By night word was brought to the ship that he was raving. The blow on his head had caused him to lose his memory. He had forgotten the *Trebizond*. He would not, of course, be able to finish the voyage.

Frawdell, also, was missing.

Chaymore and the other firemen had, they said, left him in Isabella's *café*, seated at the table, drunk. They had gone to

another *café* before returning on board. That was the last they had seen of him.

The day before they were due to sail, Frawdell's body was found in the South Basin. There were no marks of violence on him. He had, it was presumed, lost his way in the darkness, and being too drunk to see where he was going had fallen into the water and been drowned.

And so the *Trebizond* put out to sea. Frawdell was dead. Smith was insane. Two other men were signed on in their stead.

The second engineer was sorry Smith had gone. He had hoped that before they reached England he would have discovered his secret. And now he would never know.

IN a street in a desolate suburb of South London, Mr. Lachan, now chief engineer of the s.s. *Erzerum*, a little stouter than in the days when he was second engineer of the *Trebizond*, but otherwise unchanged, was waiting for a bus or a taxi to take him back to his ship that lay in the Surrey Commercial Docks.

And then at the corner of a dark side-street opposite he saw a crowd. In the centre was a flaring acetylene gas jet, and a man speaking. Drawn like so many others by curiosity, he crossed the street.

The speaker was a small man with grey hair, bareheaded, dressed like a clergyman.

"Friends, the weight of our sins lies heavy on our hearts! Can any of us, looking back into the dead years that are past, say that we have never sinned? Can we say that there is nothing of which we are not ashamed? Friends, we are all of us sinners! Repent, for the time is drawing nigh. . . ."

And then the speaker turned his head. In the light of the acetylene gas jet his face was, though worn and wrinkled and sad, the face of Smith, the *Trebizond's* trimmer.

Mr. Lachan listened without hearing what he was saying, lost in a whirl of emotions and memories. He had met Smith, at last, after all these long years!

A tall young man in glasses, whose manner was that of one determined to do good at whatever cost to his feelings, and obviously a helper—part of the show, Mr. Lachan decided—was going from man to man in the small and rapidly diminishing crowd, offering what appeared to be tracts or pamphlets. He reached Mr. Lachan.

"Brother!" he said, holding out one of the tracts. "Will you accept one of these?"

Mr. Lachan ignored the gift.

"Is that Mr. Smith speakin'?" Mr. Lachan asked.

"No," said the young man. "That's Mr. Spridgeon. The Reverend Alfred Spridgeon."

"Oh!" said Mr. Lachan. "How long's he been preachin'?"

"He's been spreading the light one way and another ever since he came down from Oxford. A scholar and an athlete. He played for his 'Varsity. Stand-off half." The young man became almost a human being. "Wonderful tackle. Scored against Cambridge from his own twenty-five. It's a privilege to be associated with him."

The service ended in a short prayer.

"Good night, friends, and thank you!" The little preacher stepped down from the box on which he had been standing.

Mr. Lachan approached him, certain even now that this was Smith, the trimmer of the *Trebizond*, who had gone mad at Buenos Ayres.

"Mr. Spridgeon," he said, "do you remember me?"

"I'm afraid I don't," said the little man, brightly. He held out his hand. "But you know me, eh? May I ask you your name?"

"My name is Lachan. I used to be second engineer of the *Trebizond!* Now do you remember? We left you in hospital in Buenos Ayres!"

An expression of fear shot into the pale blue eyes of the little preacher. His smile faded. His cheeks were white.

"Mr. Lachan," he said, "we must have a talk." He laid his hand on his arm. "I know of a place where we can talk without being disturbed. You're not in a hurry, I hope?"

WHEN they were seated in the parlour at the back of a small eating house the little preacher leant forward across the table and spoke in a fierce whisper. "Now," he said, "Mr. Lachan, tell me! What is it?"

He looked older than in the days when Mr. Lachan had first known him, older and not so robust. His frame seemed to have shrunk; there were deep grooves in his face; his hair was grey and thin on the temples.

Mr. Lachan felt nervous.

"Mr. Spridgeon," he said, "is that your real name?"

The little man nodded.

"Well, I knew you as Smith. You know that I did. Don't you remember me? Lachan, that used to be second."

"No," said the little man. "No, I can't remember. What did you say was the ship?"

"The *Trebizond*. We signed you on in Genoa. You'd been ill—and left there."

He frowned. "What was the ship you'd been on before, now? The *Joanna*, from Philadelphia. Do you mean to say you've forgotten?"

"I can't believe it; and yet—yet——" He ended in what seemed a gasp of pain. Then he continued: "How d'you know that I'm Smith?"

"If you're Smith," said the engineer, "and you are, you've got a scar on the side of your head, just over your ear, where the second mate hit you with the windlass lever."

"Hit *me!*" said the little man, weakly. "Why—what for?"

"Have you got that scar?" asked the engineer.

"Yes," he answered. "Yes, it's there. I've felt it often and wondered."

"Wondered?" And then a great light burst upon Mr. Lachan. He understood. "Mr. Spridgeon," he said, "I think I know. After you were hit you forgot everything—you didn't know where you were; you didn't know any of us on board ship; and they told us afterward, when you'd been taken to hospital, that——" A sudden disinclination to hurt this poor little man came over him; he hesitated, and then, knowing that he must go on with the explanation now he had begun, he plunged. "After you'd been taken to hospital, they told us you'd lost your memory. You understand, Mr. Spridgeon. And so you've forgotten the *Trebizond?* But you were once a trimmer on board, and your name is Smith."

The little man was leaning forward, his elbows on the table, his hands covering his face.

"Smith!" he said. Then he looked up. "Smith, is that who I am?"

"Old man," said the engineer, "you're not to worry. Mebbe I shouldn't have told you. But I felt I had to. Don't worry. You're Spridgeon, so far's I'm concerned, from now on."

And then, with a feeling of dull bewilderment, he remembered what the young man with the glasses had said. Spridgeon, the famous Spridgeon, who had been preaching ever since he came down from Oxford! Spridgeon, who had played football for his 'Varsity! Stand-off half! Then who was Smith? Where did Smith, the trimmer of the *Trebizond*, come in?

The little man sighed.

"Mr. Lachan," he said, slowly, "you've filled a blank in my life which might never have been filled but for my meeting you to-night. Spridgeon's my name. But——" Again he gave a deep sigh. "But some years ago, Mr. Lachan, I had a breakdown. That's how I put it."

He broke off and stared about him with a troubled expression in his pale eyes. So had he looked when Frawdell had hurt him, laughed at him, in the stokehold.

"I lost someone," he continued, "who was very dear to me. It was not her fault—no, not her fault. Humanity, Mr. Lachan! Humanity! Poor humanity! She went away with another man. Left me. I never knew what happened afterward. I remember reading her letter. I remember walking for miles in the rain. I remember nothing more, Mr. Lachan, till I was in hospital in Buenos Ayres.

"Do you understand? Walking in London in the rain, the East India Dock Road, and waking in hospital in Buenos Ayres! And of the years between—nothing, Mr. Lachan, nothing remained. Not a trace. They called me Smith. Smith was my name. I'd had a blow on my head. They thought that my memory had gone; but it hadn't, Mr. Lachan, it hadn't. It had come back to me! I was Spridgeon, a clergyman: Alfred Spridgeon, not Smith at all. And I never told them. No, I never told them. I couldn't. They would not have believed me. And, Mr. Lachan, do you know, two years had passed. Two years had gone out of my life. And I didn't know what had become of me, where I had been—anything, except I was called Smith and had been a trimmer or fireman. Mr. Lachan, when I reached home I told them I'd had a breakdown and had been away for my health."

A spasm of what seemed some terrible fear or horror shook him.

"An' you don't remember Genoa, Huelva, New York, Boston, eh? You don't remember moonin' around New York by yourself, an' upsettin' a dago who'd knocked over a couple of little girls, an' the mate an' I draggin' you out of the crowd, an' the police, eh? You don't remember the time we sighted a schooner in distress an' put out the port lifeboat, an' it turned over an' we put out the other, an' you jumped over the rail an' saved the life of one of the deck-hands, eh? You don't remember nothin' of that, eh?"

The little man shook his head.

"All gone," he muttered. "All of it."

"But how did it happen you came to take on a job as trimmer, eh? How could you do the work? How did you get hold of a discharge book?"

"I've always been interested in the sea, Mr. Lachan: most of my work lay down by the docks. I'd been for voyages in tramp steamers as a passenger, for the experience. I'd studied the life; made friends with the men; watched them in

the stokeholds and bunkers; questioned them. I can understand all that, Mr. Lachan, but the discharge book "—he gave a shrug of his shoulders—" that I do not understand. Things happen at sea, I know." He smiled wearily. " And I managed to do the work, did I ? "

" Yes," said the engineer, " you did. You worked hard. You didn't seem strong, not for coal-trimming, but you stuck it. We admired you, Mr. Spridgeon, all of us."

" Mr. Lachan," said the little man in a low voice, " tell me. What kind of a man—what kind of a man was I when I was a trimmer on board the *Trebizond ?* "

" How d'you mean ? "

" I know what trimmers and firemen are. Their temptations are many. Mr. Lachan, was I "—a dull red flush came into the pale cheeks—" was I straight ? "

The engineer felt a sudden sympathy stirring within him.

" Mr. Spridgeon," he said, " I wish to God when my time comes I could know I was one quarter as good a man as you were when you were Smith ! "

The little man sat with his chin propped on his fists, his pale eyes staring into space.

He broke off and stared about him with a troubled expression in his pale eyes.

Presently he dropped his hands on to the table.

" Mr. Lachan," he said, dully, " there's just one thing. I've worried myself almost out of my mind." He smiled once more. " Out of all those missing months, only one thing remains: only one suggestion of something remembered: something evil ! It's killing me ! Mr. Lachan, tell me ! Did I ever do anyone any harm ? "

Mr. Lachan was troubled.

"Why, no! What harm could you have done?"

And still the little man seemed no happier.

"You promise you'll tell me the truth?"

"I promise," said Mr. Lachan.

"Mr. Lachan, this is what I remember. Or see. Or dream. There's a man I hate. A big man. A horrible man. And he hates me. And there's a girl. All very vague and shadowy. The man is unkind to her and bullies her. I feel I've got to do something. The world will be better for all of us when that man is out of it! You see, Mr. Lachan?" The engineer nodded his head. "And I'm waiting for this man, in the night. But it's light, for the moon is in the sky, shining on the water. And this man comes walking along, drunk—yes, drunk—reeling from side to side. And I go to him—this is what I see—go to him and put my arm through his, and he laughs at me and calls me bad names and says things, horrible things, about me. I tell him we're going back to the ship. But we're not. I take him away from the ship, in the other direction, talking. And all the time I'm waiting my chance. And then, Mr. Lachan, I lead him to the edge of the quay—it makes me afraid even to think of it—I lead him to the edge of the quay"—his voice was so low that it was difficult to hear him—"and I give him a shove and he falls into the water—and never comes up. And I stand and watch the ripples in the moonlight, the circles growing larger and larger. And I know that he's dead!"

The little man ended abruptly and sat gazing at Mr. Lachan with a look of despair in his pale eyes and his face white.

The engineer's mouth was dry and his heart was pounding and he could scarcely speak.

"That's nonsense, Mr. Spridgeon, of course! Nonsense!"

"And it isn't true?"

"True! How could it be true? Why, what was the man like that you see?"

"A broad-shouldered man, Mr. Lachan; broad, with black hair and a black moustache, and horrible little eyes, close together, and a big purple scar on his chin. I can see him as plainly as I see you, Mr. Lachan. Was there anyone like that on board?"

He waited, his face quivering.

"Was there anyone like that on board?" repeated Mr. Lachan easily. "Why, no, Mr. Spridgeon! No one at all!" He broke into laughter that sounded, in his own ears, harsh and unreal. "The idea! It's something you dreamt, Mr. Spridgeon! It never happened to you, anyway, that I swear!"

"Thank God for that!" The little man bowed his head. "Thank God! Thank God!"

When he looked up again, there were tears in his eyes.

"I'm free at last," he said; "free from the burden that was killing me!"

And Mr. Lachan knew that though the murderer of Frawdell, the fireman, sat facing him across the table, yet he had spoken the truth.

For the murderer of Frawdell was Smith, the *Trebizond's* trimmer, and the man who had told him the story was Spridgeon, who preached the Gospel to the Heathen down by the docks!

CONAN DOYLE'S REMINISCENCES.

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE has written his Reminiscences for publication in "The Strand Magazine." Sir Arthur gives a full account of his early life, of his setting up as a doctor without patients, of his living on a shilling a day, of how he began to write, of his early failures, of the coming of Sherlock Holmes and all his subsequent success.

Sir Arthur has been a great traveller and a lover of almost every sort of sport, while he has, of course, been well acquainted with the most eminent and interesting men of the day. His Reminiscences of George Meredith, Barrie, Lloyd George, Lord Balfour, Rudyard Kipling, Henry Irving, Bernard Shaw, Robert Louis Stevenson, and others make absorbing reading.

In fact, the whole of Sir Arthur's Reminiscences will provide a rich treat for the readers of "The Strand Magazine," in which their publication will commence in an early number.

AS I KNOW THEM

Some Women Writers of To-day

II.

SHEILA KAYE-SMITH CLEMENCE DANE
MAY SINCLAIR VIOLET HUNT
FRYN TENNYSON JESSE REBECCA WEST

By MRS C.A. DAWSON-SCOTT

CLEMENCE DANE.

THE first time I met Clemence Dane —I did not see her. That seems a curious statement, but it is a fact. Symbolic, too.

It was at an all-novelist party, which I remember for its shape. We sat in a ring, and my neighbour on the right being deep in talk with the novelist next to her, and Ford Madox Hueffer on the left being in a silent mood, I was at leisure to look round the circle and meditate. I found myself wondering over the curious oddments we put on our heads and speak of as hats. Regarded coldly, how unlovely is a hat, what a bird's-nest of bits, what a queer addition to that interesting object the human skull! While I was comparing the Indian sari with our Western wear, a tall young woman rose and went out; and my hostess said: "That was Clemence Dane. Wrote 'Regiment of Women.' Don't you know it? Oh, I will lend it to you."

I took the brown book home with me, and thus made the acquaintance of a new and interesting writer. The first part—the school, the girls, the mistresses, the inevitable tragedy—seemed to me an admirable piece of work. The man and the love-making I found less convincing. I looked in later stories for a more all-round sense of reality, better drawing—and found it. Although her men have become real, however, Miss Dane draws them in a withdrawn fashion, as if she had observed rather than imagined them.

After reading "Regiment of Women" I looked out for her books, and can remember when "Legend" was the talk of every tea-party. The comments of a number of writers on a book are illuminating. That they should discuss it at all is a proof of its merit. What they grow busy with are those merits, the quality of the work, where the writer has brought off what she was trying to do, the why of her success and of her failure. Before they have finished, the thing emerges stark from its draperies. I have learnt more from one such discussion than ever I did from a review.

Shortly after "Legend" was published I spent an evening with Miss Clemence

Dane at her flat. When I arrived she was at the telephone, and although she looked as if she had heard a somewhat horrifying piece of news, she was laughing. "Oh, no," she said, "I assure you I am all right. Yes, certainly I will prove it to you. To-morrow at eight? Delighted."

She turned to me. "It is not everybody who answers the telephone to be asked if she is dead!"

It appeared that Mr. Heinemann, who took a friendly interest in the people whose books he published, had heard that day that she had died suddenly. In great distress he had rung up the flat, to be answered reassuringly by Miss Dane herself.

When I next met her it was William Heinemann who was dead, and we—the many to whom he had shown kindness—who were distressed. This time she was at a dinner given at the Bath Club by the surviving partner; and after dinner she sat for a long time on the arm of a chair, talking to Countess Russell (author of "Elizabeth and Her German Garden"). Sharply on that followed her success with "A Bill of Divorcement"; but she had been working too hard, and it was telling on her health. It became evident that, much as she enjoyed the cheery life of London, she must have the peace of a long-sustained quiet, that quiet which only life in the country gives. Like the rest of the world, she set out, therefore, to find a country cottage.

MISS CLEMENCE DANE'S cottage, when she discovered it, proved something very different from the ordinary week-end bungalow. It was a real old English farmhouse. The thatch came low over its ancient eyes, and one wing was in so dilapidated a condition that it had to be pulled down and rebuilt. Nowadays "Datchers" are hard to find, but one was presently forthcoming to cover the new wing with reed—as country people call the cleaned golden straw—and before long it will be indistinguishable from the rest of the building. The farmhouse is in the warm south of Devon, not far from one of the slowly-moving tidal rivers that turn and come again by the English Channel; and there among chosen friends Miss Dane lives, coming to London only for an occasional fortnight. It was during such a break in the even flow of her workaday life that she found herself able to come to the P. E. N. International last May. Being a fine speaker, able to marshal her facts in the order she would have them, and, no matter how large and terrifying the audience, to make her points, she is often asked to lecture. On this particular day she found it would be impossible to attend the dinner unless she dressed at the hotel where it was given, as she was lecturing that very afternoon. Arriving early, in order to see that all was in order, I caught a glimpse of long, dark hair that was being twisted quickly into place, and feared lest she should be too tired to enjoy herself. She has a certain air of efficiency, and had been chosen, as she spoke French, to sit next to Romain Rolland, who speaks no English. Once or twice during the evening I glanced her way—to see her lifting her glass in friendly communion with Gonnoské Komai, the Japanese poet, or deep in talk with M. Rolland, and she appeared so animated that my fears were set at rest. She told me afterwards that she had tried to amuse the latter with an account of her chicken-farming, but, once launched on it, had found that all the necessary French words, such as incubator, chicken-run, etc., had shamelessly fled from her memory. M. Rolland had smiled his gentle, dreamy smile, but I wonder how much he made out of those stories.

Miss Dane's new play was finished early this year, and a delightful cast chosen. After four days' rehearsal, however, Miss Meggie Albanesi was taken ill—and seriously ill. As she had been billed for the chief part there was nothing for it but to postpone the play till the autumn. In "A Bill of Divorcement" Miss Dane had given us a well-constructed piece of sound dramatic work, which was all the more welcome in that such is rarely seen on the London stage. It was a disappointment, not only to actors and producers and writer, that this new play has had to be postponed, but also to the public.

Before sitting down to write this slight impression, I decided to go round and see her, for that London flat of hers is not far from my house. I knew a few unimportant facts about her: that she was born near London, had been to school in Geneva, and had a considerable talent for painting—I had seen a study of the Cornish sea that had made me long to take the next train to the West—but of the real essential Clemence Dane I knew nothing. Busy all day, I did not remember my intention until it was growing late, so took a hurrying taxi to her door. Having been there before, I thought I should remember the number.

I went to number nine. A stranger opened to me, a stranger who had never heard of Miss Dane and who seemed to think I had disturbed her unnecessarily. Returning to the wet pavement, I gazed anxiously up and down that unlovely street of red mansions. Many, many mansions—mansions on both sides and at the end. She might be behind any one of the blinds that hid a lighted interior. I asked where

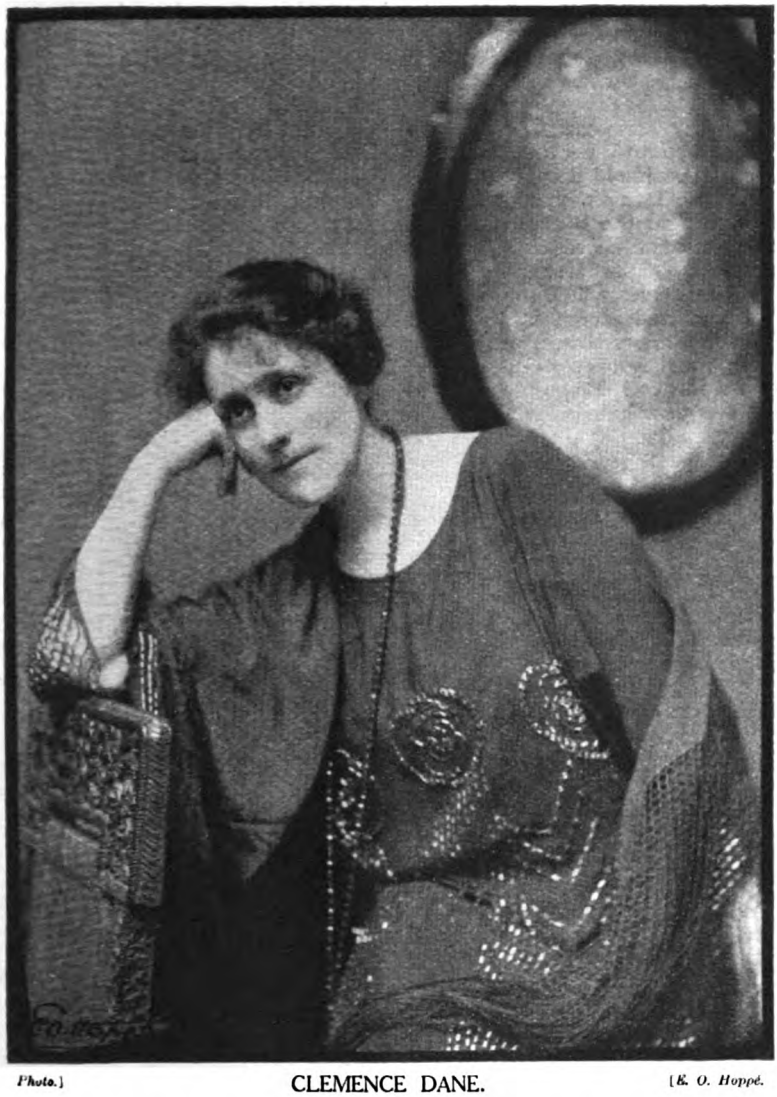


Photo.] CLEMENCE DANE. [*E. O. Hoppé.*

the porter lived, but there was no porter. I begged to look at a telephone-book—but she was not in the book under her writing name. I intercepted passers-by, I even dared the wrath of more occupiers. Most of them said, "I did not know we had anyone so famous living here," but nobody knew where she was to be found, and there were hundreds and hundreds of flats. Only when I had despairingly decided to return home did I espy a postman. Of course, he would know.

So I found Miss Clemence Dane.

But did I? I do not feel sure.

I certainly talked to her, exchanged views on literature with her, discovered that she admired Kipling and "A Midsummer Night's Dream." But the Clemence Dane who lay behind intellectual appreciations and theories of art?

"I should like to read what you say," she remarked when I bade her a thoughtful good night.

"When you write for the public you are able to write impersonally. When you write for one person's eyes it is different."

She left that to take up another point. "I can't see why the public should want to know about writers."

"They ought, of course, to be able to see for themselves. We look at them over the top of every page that we write."

"We give," she said, "what we wish to, but otherwise we belong to ourselves."

I should have said we give, not what we wish to, but what we must. I don't know that Miss Dane would agree. As she writes when she would rather paint, even so she may be able to control her output, may actually give and withhold according to her will. That would, I think, mean that she was able to keep in the background that self which we cannot share or give and which sets each of us apart from all others.

And yet—these selves which are to us so infinitely precious and secret, is one more different from the others than a pea among peas in a pod, are they even as different as the flowers in a garden? Biographies would make us believe that humanity is cut to a pattern, but then biographies seem to me the most degraded form of fiction. "A man's a man" in spite of his relatives' wish to have him portrayed as a characterless plaster saint.

On the first occasion that we met I had only seen Miss Clemence Dane's—hat! This last time I saw a bit of her mind and the long, handsome outward presentment of her, but Miss Dane herself I did not see. We look at a human being, wondering what lies behind the walls, the defences, what is at the heart of the fortress. Veils of benevolence, of nobility, hang between our sight and what is within the innermost room.

We should, each of us, be able to see through the windows of Clemence Dane's books and plays; or, no—I think the clearest window would be that of the pictures she has longed to, but has not yet painted.

VIOLET HUNT.

IT seems as if I had known that fair woman, Violet Hunt, all my life. There is even between us a faint bond of consanguinity, for she is, like myself, descended from a gipsy of the Faa tribe—as, also, is another writer, the Scottish poet, C. M. Grieve. It is a long while ago—some two hundred years—that that gipsy body left her open-air tribe for the love of a settled man. The roof that sheltered them is a grass-grown heap of stones, but the stimulus of her restless heart and feet still works, a ferment, in the blood of her descendants.

I was newly married and living in Bennett Street, St. James's, when one Sunday afternoon Ella d'Arcy (of Yellow Book fame), dropping in to tea, brought a friend. I remember to this day the gown—it was summer weather—of pale diaphanous grey and the shadowy hat that the stranger wore, and how pretty, how very pretty I thought her. In the grey of Miss Hunt's gown was some hint of colour, a faint elusive hint, but it warmed, it suggested.

She came more than once, a charming figure in the group of friends I had gathered about me. Then misfortune, in the shape of illness, swept me out of London. Our house had no back, the children suffered, and with all the ill-will in the world I went to live at Cowes.

Not for many years did I see Violet Hunt again; but I read her books, and when "White Rose of Weary Leaf" was published wrote to congratulate her on having written the book of the year.

In the course of time I shook the dust of Cowes from my skirts, but by then both Violet Hunt and I had passed the dull middle of life and entered on that time of greater freedom and enjoyment which immediately follows it. In other words, my babies were growing big and she had married.

I am probably wrong, however, in calling any part or moment of her life dull. Overcrowded, sometimes, but not dull.

Living on the outskirts of London, I asked her to come and see me. I was giving a small party in the queerly shaped rooms—they had been constructed without a single right angle—of the Bank House at Southall; and she and her husband, Ford Madox Hueffer, came down for it. I have still a mental picture of them walking up the long room, Ford big, fair, flamboyant, she slender and lovely in a ripple of colour made by the opalescent sequins of a Paris frock. I think only the spirit of adventure could have made them come so far for so little.

Born at Durham, Violet was the daughter of a painter whose wife was soon to gather the artistic life of London under an hospitable roof. From baby days she and her two sisters met all the clever Victorians—the Pre-Raphaelites, the poets, the novelists.

On one occasion the *Pall Mall Gazette* offered a prize of five pounds to whomsoever should be able to name the twelve best works by the twelve best writers of the day, the list to be in accordance with the majority verdict of the competitors. Violet Hunt has always had an instinctive knowledge of crowd opinion. The twelve that she sent in won the prize, and on the day the result was announced it chanced that she met Robert Browning in the street. He reproached her with—"Why do you say 'The Ring and the Book' is my finest piece of work?"

"I don't think it is," she answered, candidly, "but I knew the others would."

He was much amused, and later that day, meeting her at a party, he clapped her on the shoulder in his hearty way with—"Here is a little girl who is telling the world what it thinks is my finest book."

She met them all, the men and women who loomed so large in England—though perhaps only there. As we know, Oscar Wilde, whom London thought so witty, proved a disappointment to the French, their verdict on him being that he was a clumsy fellow, a sort of buffoon. It was the same with most of the others—at least as far as Europe was concerned. The Victorian age was looked upon abroad as one of stucco and the pilaster, with Bulls of Bashan roaring at the tea-parties and people being content to sit and listen while mediocre poets read their verse aloud!

It is a marvel that Violet Hunt, brought up in the midst of so much that was pseudo, escaped from it unhurt—nay, more, that, a child of tradition, she should have been able to march with the times. That she did so is proved by nothing so much as her parties. As if instinctively, she has

Photo] VIOLET HUNT. [E. O. Hoppé.

winnowed the chaff from the grain. In consequence you meet at her house only the people who count, who are in the movement.

They are not all young, these people, but they have grown with the century, proved themselves still alive by their adaptability—they are not dead-heads. Stuffy, sticky people—she must have known such, but she has forgotten that she did. She is too busy reading the new books, giving, in her pathetic voice, her own dry point of view, to remember that in the background of life is still a clutter of prejudiced old-fashioned folk—half-dead, nearly dead. In the matter of eternal youth, Violet Hueffer is a second Ninon de l'Enclos. The other day, parting from her at the Tottenham Court Road corner of Oxford Street, I watched her run across to the Tube station. The traffic was rushing and roaring along, like a river in flood; but she slipped quickly in and out, her skirt lifted over young limbs, her slender shape appearing and disappearing among the buses for all the world as if she were only seventeen.

Her parties are the most enjoyable I know. They have a go and swing that is more stimulating than champagne. Glancing up from engrossing talk with some wholly delightful person, I wonder how she does it.

Her success as a hostess is due, no doubt, to her quality of restlessness. Her house is full of quiescent things, but she lives, and life for her is movement. She shines and she moves. It is as if a warming but not burning flame had left the hearth to permeate the rooms.

Beatrice Harraden has a theory that if we live with old furniture and books and ornaments, things that have been part of the lives of a preceding generation, we are apt to let the past bulk too largely in our lives. Reminiscences are of less importance than the story of the passing hour, the growth of rational thought of more thrilling interest than its beginnings, what is than what was. She may be right, but somehow the vitality of Mrs. Hueffer has made it possible not only for her to live among old, very old, things, but, as it were, to contrast happily with them. She wears her surroundings like a series of many-coloured veils.

As a rule I dislike bibelots. My instinct, when they are shown me, is to turn on them severely with, "Hie thee to a museum." Furniture should be a setting for the personality of the individual using it, not a thing in itself. Much of Mrs. Hueffer's belonged to her parents, and by long use has become part of an essentially stable and constant nature, but there are other pieces.

A CERTAIN Frenchman who had some very beautiful cane and gilt chairs—I forget the period—lost his wife, and, losing her, found his everyday life with its reminders intolerable. He decided to become a Trappist monk, and the Hueffers, who had always admired the dimly-golden single and double chairs, became their owners. They are fragile and beautiful, and though I am afraid to sit down on one, they always seem to me part of the room, a background that is satisfying. The small faint souls are at home within those walls, and in some way the queer scrogglywogs and scarlet doors of Wyndham Lewis, the pictures by Mrs. Hueffer's father and Ford Madox Brown, live with them in an astonishing peace.

The house echoes with old witty talk, it is a home of memories. You seem to see Oscar Wilde arranging his ambrosial lock before the glass in the hall, little fat Henry James lunching off the dishes he found so delectable, W. H. Hudson discussing the latest, most scandalous divorce, and Cunninghame Graham, light as a feather, declaring that women novelists write heavily, emphasizing their points, outlining their characters with thick strokes, *thundering*——

As Harold Godwinsson said long ago, we can own nothing but "six foot of English earth, or so much more as we are taller than other men." Indeed, when we think in æons we cannot suppose ourselves as owning even that. We may surround our bodies with clothes, with furniture, with the walls of a house; but what we really have, what we shall take with us at the end, are not these things but our experiences. They have shaped us—we are, ourselves, the sum of these unknown, unrecorded events. Mrs. Hueffer has had a wide experience of life, and it has given her, not the sweetness which means that the apple is ripe, overripe, about to decay, but—understanding.

REBECCA WEST.

ONE perfect day—in Cornwall the days are all perfect, yes, even those of mist and rain and storm, but this was a day of sun and opalescent shimmers over a peacock sea. One perfect day, then, Sheila Kaye-Smith and G. B. Stern and I set out to walk to Mother Ivey Bay. When we reached the bay Sheila decided to stay there and

meditate, but Peter (which is G. B. Stern's name among her intimates, for, alas, her G stands for Gladys !)—Peter and I went on up the side of the headland to the Merope Rocks (please pronounce to rhyme with Europe, for that is the Cornish way), and as we climbed the last stile she said : " Do you know Rebecca West's work ? "

" Er—yes," I answered, a little dubiously. " Brilliant stuff, but I do not think she is a critic."

" I don't mean her newspaper work, but her book—' The Return of the Soldier.' "

I had not read it, and we sat down to talk, sat on the edge of the cliff and gazed across at castellated rocks on which gulls were nesting, and beyond which lay a smooth sea which had changed from peacock to powder blue. While we sat there Peter told me of Rebecca, the untidy schoolgirl who had somehow contrived to get her sincere young opinions printed in the columns of the daily press—how she got the stuff past the prejudiced keepers of the door I can't imagine ! Peter explained that in reality Rebecca owned a soft-sounding northern name and hailed from Edinburgh. Happening to be for a short time on the stage, she found for herself, in one of Ibsen's plays, a more suitable name.

Photo.] REBECCA WEST. *[E. O. Hoppé.*

"Of course, it makes everybody think she is Jewish; but," said Peter, regretfully, "she is only Scottish."

She lapsed into a story, a story of those early days on the stage. During an interval Miss West was seen to be engrossed by some book, and the stage-manager glanced inquiringly over her shoulder. When he saw she was reading Euripides in the original he shook his head with the natural man's dislike of everything which savoured of highbrowism. "Worse for your career than dram-drinking would be," quoth he. Part of the remark was overheard, and it went round, "Oh, isn't it a pity? Rebecca West has taken to dram-drinking!"

After some time I had a birthday and Peter gave me "The Return of the Soldier." It was a little book and I read it in a day. I read it and I loved it. To me it was like an emerald that lies on your open hand under the noon sun, a large green-glimmering flawed emerald. I expounded these views to Peter during another successful walk, and we agreed that, to our thinking, this young writer gave promise of being our finest —our finest since Emily Brontë.

Mountains, though stupendous, are often roughly shaped, indeed almost formless. Emily Brontë's work is less finished, more faulty in construction, than that of her sisters, Charlotte and Anne. Yet it is infinitely greater, a Mount Everest as compared with Fujiyama. In the same way, while Rebecca West's books seem to me of more importance than any novels being written to-day—even those by the foreigner whom we have made so kindly welcome—they are also tremendously flawed.

I met Rebecca West at one of those delightful parties which Violet Hunt gives only too seldom—though however many she gave we should still "ask for more." Never had I seen eyes so burning bright, nor had I had any idea she would be so dark. We sat together for a little in the window seat; and since then, whenever I have a moment's leisure, I think to myself, "I would like to see Rebecca West."

At that particular moment she was reft from me by the novelist who is now hermetically sealed to a wee island, for which he left a larger one, which again he—yes, and it goes on like that. He looked, I thought, a little self-conscious, a little anxious. It was as if—let us say it quietly—she had slated his latest book and he wanted to make sure that she wouldn't do it again.

REBECCA has the Greek spirit, that spirit which demanded freedom of thought and speech. She spent her journalistic years making swaling fires of the rubbish with which the pseudo, the puerile, the unhealthy sought to clutter our shelves. If she is not that learned, dry-as-dust fellow the true scholar and critic, she has a *flair* for good work, a passion for what is original and vital. Swinging gaily through literary England, she has knocked over with a swish of her skirts all sorts of futilities, and they lie prone, the sawdust running out of them, the wax melting from their painted faces. "How long, O Lord, how long," was her comment on such an one, and Fleet Street laughed. Then it counted the pages of "The Judge."

Shortly after I first met Rebecca West, G. B. Stern got married and took a house in South Cornwall. During that summer Rebecca West and Sheila Kaye-Smith went to stay either with her or in the neighbourhood. I always have a headache in the soft air of South Cornwall, but this place was well enough in its way, and, of course, very beautiful. The water supply was, however, somewhat primitive; indeed, Peter's came from a large underground cistern, part of which was below the house and the rest under the front garden. One warm afternoon the cistern failed to function. A procession of gifted novelists carrying pails to the nearest pump (a quarter of a mile away) and returning heavy laden made a break in the monotony of village life, but to the pageant itself this seemed an experience of which it might soon tire. The most understanding villager was therefore induced to climb down into the cistern and "do things." Later that day the postman, bowed under a burthen of reviews—the reviews of these young people's lately-published novels—came to the door, and for a time peace reigned. They read their own and then everybody else's reviews. But even the happiest evening can come to an end. The last slip fluttered on to the table and Rebecca, roused—no doubt from dreams of enormous royalties—by the striking of a clock, said good-bye to the others and started for her lodgings. The most understanding villager had also (having cleaned, mended, and filled the cistern) returned home. A trifling matter had, however, escaped his tidying hand. He had omitted to close the round opening in the garden path. The night was dark and still. Suddenly those left behind heard—oh, not a scream, but the soft, tender voice of Rebecca uttering things neither soft nor tender from, as it appeared to them, under their feet. Having dropped plumb into that large full cistern, she was uttering her thoughts aloud. It was surprising what a vocabulary she proved to possess!

She has one of the loveliest speaking voices I have ever heard. Its soft richness makes even speaking to her on the 'phone a joy. I can't often make out *what* she says,

but that is of no importance. As long as that liquid murmur continues, I will stand and listen. She is going to America to lecture, and I can imagine vast audiences mesmerized not by what she is saying—though that, of course, will be "rich and rare"—but by her utterance. I hope when she goes to the States that they won't kill her with kindness or rush her about too much; for though she looks so splendidly robust she is not, in reality, strong. People who are born in the North ought to be able to stand mist and rain and general dankness, but our climate does not suit Miss West, and we are all glad that she has promised—yes, actually promised—to lecture in Switzerland next winter. Dry mountain air, a baking sun, fresh clear air, and windless weather are tonic. She will enjoy her time at Klosters.

It is a curious thing that in Europe she should be better known by her monograph on Henry James than by her stories. More than once during the war she was sent copies of the former which had been found in—of all places—the German trenches!

The book is not very well known here.

We must remember that many of our writers—Hardy, for instance—obtained recognition on the Continent long before they got it in their own country. The writers popular among us are not those who live in world literature, but rather the charlatans of art, the wind-bags.

Rebecca West has in her time pricked many of these. She stands for freedom and soundness. She is the new woman, who has come through tribulation, not seeking liberty but obliged by her strength to take it, and mellowing as she obeys.

ONE last glimpse of her. With those burning brown eyes, that heavy black hair, she is a noticeable figure in any gathering. As she enters a hall the murmur goes round: "I say—who is that?"

At one of the P. E. N. Club dinners she wore an ornament of cut steel which suggested a queen of some old-world empire. People came across to ask who it was and beg to be introduced; in fact, she created a sensation. During the evening I got a chance to tell her what I thought of her headdress and she laughed.

"The fact is that I forgot I was going out to dinner to-night and washed my hair!" said she. "I simply could not get it dry in time and did not know what to do, till I remembered someone had given me this barbaric ornament. It disguises facts all right."

ACROSTICS.

OUR twenty-fourth series of acrostics begins with No. 121, printed below, and will run for four months. Prizes to the value of twelve guineas will be awarded to the most successful solvers.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 121.

FROM Europe to the States the way is plain;
The other way will bring us back again.

1. Pencil or pen will do what sounds correct.
2. Within this isle a weight you may detect.
3. Two make fourteen, and six are forty-two.
4. Hill split in twain, or rapid stream we view.
5. 'Tis wielded by the batsman, word of woe.
6. As I am writing, continent I show.
7. Gentle at times, yourself, a book may be.
8. Ending with rope, reverse of harmony.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 121 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on August 10th. They must be written on half-sheets of notepaper, or on cards; at the foot of the solution must appear the solver's pseudonym, and (except in the case of postcards) nothing else. Flimsy paper should not be used.

One alternative answer may be sent to each light.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 120.

BESIDE the sea—in Yorkshire, or in Kent—
By many now a happy time is spent.

1. This all at once, in restoration days,
   Told tale of rival king in specious phrase.
2. A famous part, with part of part oft played,
   Here gains a head, and thus a head is made.
3. Louisa first, then Lydia he wed;
   His second name we ask, bereft of head.
4. A land of Hope and Glory, and Romance,
   Pride, Pomp, and most exciting Circumstance.
5. This man was foreman in a famous case;
   A tale that has no hero names the place.
6. The three names of one man alike we treat,
   Then bird and this enclose a London street.
7. Dry leaves, almost unknown, a wondrous breath
   Of younger inspiration saved from death.
8. The A B C reveals it, in its prime,
   Three four, presumably, the proper time.
9. Half name of one from whom a continent
   Received its name, by some strange accident.
10. Dull realm! Two or three voices, persons three,
    And relatives that often disagree.
11. The first was fifth, of second name now think,
    A rhyme for third will turn our minds to drink.

PAX.

1.	S	an	B
2.	C	lea	R
3.	A	ld	O
4.	R	uritani	A
5.	B	lin	D
6.	O	lme	S
7.	R	ubaiya	T
8.	O	lg	A
9.	U	cc	I
10.	G	ramma	R
11.	H	oratiu	S

NOTES.—Light 1. Sanballat. Nehemiah vi., 7. Light 2. Lear, theatrical part; played with art. Cape Clear. 3. Ralph Waldo Emerson. 4. Anthony Hope's romance, "The Prisoner of Zenda." 5. Bunyan, "The Pilgrim's Progress," the town of Vanity Fair; Mr. Blindman, foreman of the jury. Thackeray, "Vanity Fair, a novel without a hero." 6. Oliver Wendell Holmes; liver, Endell Street. 7. Omar Khayyám. Fitzgerald's version is much more than a translation. 8. Calverley, A B C: "O is the Olga (just then in its prime)"—waltz time, three-four. 9. Amerigo Vespucci, America. 11. Quintus Horatius Flaccus, Bacchus.

NO BETTER THAN SHE SHOULD BE

by

ELIZABETH FOLSOM

ILLUSTRATED BY W. E. WEBSTER

THAT is what they were saying about Cherry Concorde.

Those six words, put together in the given sequence, attach interest to a woman if she keep her social position, her intimate friends, and, incidentally, her husband—at least, that is what Cherry said when I complained. And she had certainly accomplished the three things: her entertainments, with their original ideas, were always sought; her intimates were confined to devoted ME; and Rodney Concorde—I had known him ten years and had not decided whether he were worth her keeping, until that particular twenty-four hours came along.

To get back a little reminiscently, before touching the edges of that twenty-four hours. Cherry had grown from her schooldays with me into a *svelte*, shining-haired woman, whose eyes always laughed and behind whom there always trailed a masculine procession of all ages and previous conditions of servitude. I had grown from my schooldays with Cherry into shell-rimmed glasses and a twenty-eight-inch waist; I liked Browning; I frequently interlined him with a pencil, and never, in all my thirty years, had a procession of even one trailed after me.

I had a surge of indignation the first time I knew they were talking about her—the mysterious "they" who talk. I knew well that she could no more help charming than help breathing; it was quite as involuntary. It was impossible for her not to send out that subtile something that attracts and which the masculine mind never fails to grasp. That allurement was as much a part of her as her perfect body.

About once in two or three years Cherry would write me from wherever she happened to be and say that she needed to talk out a few things and would I please come and stay a while. I always went. In fact, most of my days were spent in making ready for those summoned visits.

I went into her big entrance-hall when

afternoon tea was in full swing, and she came forward to meet me with no change in her careless voice, no smile other than those that shone always. But she put a soft arm about my neck and a cool, sweet cheek against mine.

"You dear," she said. "As dependable as the Bank of England."

She led me thus to the fire and introduced me to a group there—all men: there was one she called "Jimmie," a gaunt young man with a high forehead—half-a-dozen others of the kind who know how to hold teacups and talk smartly about nothing.

They looked at me as if I were not there, and resumed, each one of them, his contemplation of Cherry. I looked, too: her gown was a shimmering soft stuff of pinks, deep blues, and lavenders—each colour struck into its neighbour, and was at once a blend and individual; her sleeves dropped away from her shoulders in long wings: that was why I had felt her soft skin so closely—her shoes sparkled.

She did not take me to my room: she held to me. She took off my hat herself and stood talking to the others, with one hand touching me. Yes, she wanted me. Needed me? Maybe.

She did not go forward to greet the next comer; she waited for him to cross the room to her. He knew how to cross a room, too, encumbered as he was with a bunch of red roses and a slightly top-heavy swing. Jeffrey Arnold was more than fifty; extremely well dressed; grey-haired—with thick red lips. His eyes glowed at Cherry from their puffy lids; his colour heightened and ran down in a settling kind of way into his heavy throat. His hand that touched mine perfunctorily was like a cool, damp cushion. Just behind him came Cherry's husband.

I WISH to record here that the blood of all the Vere de Veres might have gone in floods through Rodney Concorde's veins, casting up, as floods do, marking lines of hauteur, fastidiousness, intolerance of all that was not super-excellent. He had a level-eyed, unseeing look over the heads of people; it should have made him earnestly disliked, but those thus swept were sometimes touched by a glance whose graciousness was swiftly tender, if he chose it so. He was the kind for whom the word "fascinating" was put together. Even I felt it, although he never saw me except as an unrepulsive worm of useful variety, to pick up and devour unoccupied hours for Cherry. Some days I loathed him for his high and mightiness; some days I saw the spell of him—or what might have been a spell for one who was not a worm.

He, too, touched my hand perfunctorily; flicked a smile my way. "Cherry has been counting on you," he said, and then, turning to her with a bland loftiness:—

"I have told Arnold that you will show him your new balcony fittings and give him a bite there after the play to-night."

"Yes? Have you?" replied she. "I hope you remembered that Lucy would be here for the play."

I catch impressions quickly, even if I am stupid in many ways; and instantly a dropped glance of Rodney's and a set look in the rims of Mr. Arnold's eyes told me I had not been expected. I said hastily:—

"Cherry, don't count on me to-night. I am tired enough to want to go to bed early. Please don't pay any attention to me."

There was no discussion about it, for more sandwiches were coming in, and Cherry left me for the tea-table. The young man called "Jimmie" sat beside me to talk about her: he was very naive about it—began at once:—

"Mrs. Concorde is the most delightful woman I ever knew," he said, with his gaze upon her.

"Yes, always," I answered. "Since she was a child she has been."

"Since a child!" said he, in a rapt way. "You have known her long. Such a privilege."

I said it was, and then was quickly angry, for he had gone on speaking almost under his breath, and saying:—

"And I, for one, don't believe all that the women say about her."

"Say about her! What do they say?"

"Oh, that she likes only men, not women."

"Well, that's all right, I'm sure. Let them say it. I do, too. Men are much more interesting than women."

"You think so?" There was an uncomplimentary emphasis on the "you."

"I know it. Women are petty, selfish."

"Men are, too," said my young man. "Look at him—he's selfish, believe me! I have wondered if that's why she does some of it."

I followed his gaze; Rodney Concorde, of course. I did not choose to discuss him with this young, masculine person, so I said nothing. He rose then and drifted towards Cherry, as if her turned back and her ignoring ways were better than anything I could offer—which they were.

I was looking into the fire and thinking about it when I heard them going, and Cherry came and stood opposite me, where the flame-light ran irregularly over her, flashing out, obscuring and flashing out again, the things about her that I loved.

Rodney came up, too, and dragged a big chair into the centre of the rug.

He did not look at either his wife or me, but she spoke at once.

"Why did you want Mr. Arnold after the play? You dislike him."

"I don't want him."

"You asked him to come."

"Yes, but I shall not be here."

"You mean I am to have him alone?"

"Exactly."

I shifted in my chair, and if I had known the way I would have slipped from what seemed to intend to be a family discussion.

"Well," said Cherry, icily, "I think I won't do it."

"He has accepted."

She shrugged.

"Really, Rodney, I am tired of being talked about for just such things as *tête-à-tête* suppers, especially"—it was bravado that then spoke, I knew—"especially when I don't select the man."

"Who talks?" he asked, curtly.

"The other day I heard a woman say I was no better than I should be because I took Jimmie Alerson up to the country place. You had asked me. I heard her myself. Not that I care"—with a wave of two hands that glittered—"except that it makes me tired. I can't go about saying that my husband wants me to do these things, and likes men to like me because they may then do business with him."

"Oh, pshaw!" he said. "That isn't true. Of course, it doesn't hurt me if the men like you, but if you intimate that I am banking on it, you are going rather far."

Again I wished I knew the way to my room.

"I dare say," said Cherry, casual again. "I want to be nice to your friends, of course, but I wish you would consult me before you give me one for an evening. I don't like Jeffrey Arnold."

"You need not like him."

"Just pretend that I do?"

"Oh, come, Cherry!"

"Well, I think he is a beast——"

SHE stopped, and for several moments there was silence. Then she leaned forward and put a hand on my shoulder; I had a fancy that it was to hold me there in my chair.

"Just what is it you want of Mr. Jeffrey Arnold, Rodney?" she asked.

He looked at us and laughed. Instantly the tenderness and charm flashed out; I felt it like a warm wave over me; I thought she felt it, too.

"I just want you to interest him. But if he should take a notion to come into the English project—it would mean a lot for us. And we need it."

"Yes," she said, as if she understood. Then she released me, but circled my waist with her arm as I got up.

"You are never jealous, Rodney," she challenged.

"Nonsense, my dear. I know you."

Her hand was heavy upon me.

"That's just it," she said. "You know the kind of woman I am—I know, too—but does *he* know? Might he mistake? I have a feeling that I shall do this once too often—tempt too far. And what should I do if that happened, my dear? I can't tell—if I were cornered."

He laughed again.

"Don't be dramatic, Cherry. You'll not be cornered. You're too clever. Isn't she, Lucy?"

I quivered. He had seen me and tossed a word to bring me into the conversation—even waited for me to answer.

I stammered. "She's clever—but clever enough to know what she can—and cannot—undertake."

"'Undertake?'" He repeated the word and looked at me as if I were really a person. "Why the word 'undertake'? It conveys the impression of a plan. Do you sense a plan, Lucy?"

"Oh, let her alone," said Cherry. "Come and see your room, Lucy. I've been selfish to keep you so long."

He was looking at me curiously as we went. I had not meant anything by the word "undertake." Certainly not that Cherry was expected to use her charm for something. But I remembered that he had said "We need it." I remembered, too, that I had wondered about Rodney's business and where the money came from for all the extravagances. Not even Cherry could keep their establishments going on just cleverness; those gowns that clung to her in sheeny sunset colours—they had been cut from fabrics bought by the yard, and people do not put sheeny things into wearing form for nothing. I knew she had called Rodney a poor man when she married him. He was a promoter; I did not know thoroughly what a promoter was, except that one sometimes made loads of money and sometimes—did not. I knew what Cherry had when her father died. Very little. I wondered.

My room was next to Cherry's boudoir, which was a fluffy rose-and-white affair. From it there sprang a balcony with a river view. Now it was glass-enclosed, and its rose and white were touched with purples and blues which she affected in her gowns. There was a table there and chairs.

"Lovely," I said.

"This is where the elect may sup with me when my husband invites." I did not like her tone. "This is where Mr. Arnold and I will have our after-theatre supper. You may even hear us from your room, Lucy."

"Where does he live?" I asked, to be saying something, for I certainly did not like her with a frown and her chin set.

"Across the street. His flat is very princely. He is a bachelor with yachts, racing cars, and all that."

After she had gone with Rodney to the play, I went to bed, and lay snugly there and speculated; things were wrong with Cherry and her husband—more just dead, perhaps, than actively wrong, and that was worse. There had been great possibilities in each of them for love and happiness. I wriggled in my soft bed—wicked when two people who had loved should forget how. The fault was Rodney's, of course, though it was impossible that he should meaningly use his wife's charm for netting business. He was a gentleman, and a gentleman would not do that. I fancied comfortably as I drowsed that it must be a temptation to a man with a charming wife of whom he was sure to let other men see that charm; it would fasten friendships that might lead to business interests. Not very high principle—and I sighed. But there could be nothing cut and dried about it, and Cherry—she could not help using that charm of hers—I smiled indulgently—she could not help being lovely—and I slept.

I STARTED, awake, when a door shut sharply. They had come in from the play, and I heard voices in the boudoir, then more plainly when they moved to the balcony, for I had raised my window.

I could not hear words, but it was Cherry's contralto coming laggingly, and the deep voice which belonged to Mr. Jeffrey Arnold with the thick throat. I knew she would be glad when the supper which she had not wanted was over. I drowsed again.

Then I was out of bed and across the room before I knew it—it had been Cherry's voice, with a note that had no business there—loud, fierce, it cut through the silence of the room. It was impossible not to hear the words:—

"Let me out! How dare you? Let me out!"

I was in the corridor, grasping the door to her room before she had finished. It was locked. I wrenched it. I threw my weight against it.

"Cherry! Cherry!" I called.

Her voice answered, but it was muffled—choked—it was trying to speak from under—from under—I thought of his heavy red lips—feet rasped; I heard something sweep across the panels of the door inside, then Cherry's voice, clear for an instant.

I beat my fists and screamed.

Then—an odd sound, unlike anything familiar; between a gurgle and a cry—an oath in a deep voice—something fell sharply, then something else, with a thumping noise. I beat the panels—the key was turned and the door flung open.

As long as I live I shall remember the Cherry I saw then: she was clutching with one hand the shoulder of her shining gown where it was torn; her hair was loosened, and it swept across her forehead as she had worn it when a child; and in her face—such horror—such anger as I hope I shall never see again.

She saw me, and the hand at her shoulder dropped; the other raised, and in it was something that glittered and that she flung at a heap on the floor—a huddled heap where there was a bent-back head and a white shirt front with a red trickle broadening across it.

As I looked Rodney ran up the stairs. He pushed me away and faced his wife; then he sprang to the man on the floor and raised him.

"What is this?" he cried, and for once there was no disdain in his voice. "What happened? What is this? Cherry, what have you done?"

She answered instantly, standing still, her torn gown slipping from her shoulder and it showing white.

"What have I done? I have done what you failed to do. I have taken care of myself. Because I had to. Because you put me where I must. Because you are a coward and a cur!"

She had been pale when she began to speak; before she had finished her face was flaming; her slight throat was red, too; her hands were gripped and held away from her; between her lips both rows of teeth showed—oh, Cherry—my pretty, pretty Cherry—like that!

"You made me bring him here. Because of you I have been branded. You are contemptible. There is no name bad enough for me to call you!"

Rodney took his hand from the man beside him.

"What do you mean? What did he say? What did he do?"

"What do you care what he said or did? You have known nothing but self all your life. Every year for ten years or more you have put me in this danger. That this has not happened before is not your fault—but because I was clever—isn't that what he said, Lucy—clever?"

Then I had sense enough to go and lay hold of her.

Rodney sprang to the man on the floor and raised him. "What is

"Hush! Hush! You exaggerate. Go into my room. Wait."

I crossed to the two on the floor.

"How much is he hurt?"

Rodney looked up at me. If Jeffrey Arnold could have seen his face he would have dreaded the return to consciousness which he was showing.

I stooped down; the wound did not seem to be close to anything vital as far as I knew; his head had struck a sharp edge as he fell, and he was coming round from that.

"Get him home. Get him home," I said. "Perhaps he can walk. Oh, my dear girl—what will come of this to her?"

No one spoke again for what seemed a long time. Rodney—I looked quickly

this?" he cried. "What happened? Cherry, what have you done?"

away from him; Cherry drew back when I tried to lead her into my room; she leaned against the door into the balcony, her eyes fixed on the others.

It could not have been really long before Jeffrey Arnold opened his eyes and struggled.

"Get up," said Rodney; and Cherry, watching, must have wondered, as I did, at the fury two words may hold.

I touched his arm.

"Don't. Be careful. Above all she must be protected. You have no right to punish because of what it would do to her."

"What shall I do, Lucy?" It was strange—that almost appeal from him.

"You must cover it up for her sake," I said swiftly as the thoughts came. "You have not the privilege to punish. Shield

her. Yourself—you have no rights. You two men," I finished, for Jeffrey Arnold was looking at me, " you two men have no rights. Shield her. Somehow."

Mr. Arnold tried to rise; he wavered and clutched. Then, big as he was, Rodney picked him up.

" I'll take him," he said, grimly.

It was hideous watching them go out —Rodney's face—the dangling legs of that other man—and her—but she pulled away from me, pushed me out, and shut her door —but gently—upon me.

Rodney did not come back. There was no sound from Cherry's room. I went into the corridor and sat on the floor beside her door. I put my head against it and listened, and wondered in a frenzy of fear. What was it going to mean to her?

Things looked black to me; he must be much hurt—I had seen those dangling legs across Rodney's arm. There would be scandal—maybe worse. Suppose he died—Cherry!

I longed to rattle the knob and talk to her, but I did not dare: there had been that in her face to cause me to hesitate.

I tried to think—suppose he should die—it was murder, wasn't it? Suppose he recovered—it was deepest scandal, wasn't it? Suppose he recovered and did not tell and it was never known: that was the best to be hoped for; but even so I could see no future laughter in Cherry's eyes; no lilt in her voice again—for to Rodney she had said words she could not unsay. She had said them plainly over that still thing on the floor, and he would not forget. Nor would she. Rodney would not forgive her: no matter what his fault, he did not lower his head for anyone.

Did he love her enough to lower it to her? No.

Did she love him enough to cover with it all she had said? No.

I could see no clear way; no possible chance ahead as I huddled on the floor.

When the servants began to move about I went back to my room and dressed. Someone must go downstairs in proper clothes and receive, whatever happened. I left my door open as I dressed: no sound of his return; no sound from her.

THERE was a gay fire in the dining-room: heartlessly gay, crackling away as if nothing had happened. Then I gasped, for I saw that the maid had filled the vase on the table with the roses that Mr. Arnold had brought. I stared at them —red—red——

The maid brought in the morning paper, and I took it, for she was looking at me curiously. I opened it, and my sight leaped to meet a picture on the front page.

" Jeffrey Arnold, Millionaire Clubman," the letters spelled.

Then something I had never known in all my thin life took me: it was as if the family horse that carried the children had suddenly set his teeth into the iron in his mouth and started—I thought of it that way. Funny how the mind works. With composure I sat down and read the article under the picture. Then I folded the paper, picture outside, and put it beside Rodney's plate.

The article had said this:—

That excitement had run high shortly before midnight with the report that Jeffrey Arnold had been killed in his rooms. Facts as there given were correct, as all the paper's statements could be relied upon to be—it said so. These facts were given to a reporter by Mr. Arnold. He had been in the sitting-room of his flat when he heard a sound and turned to grapple with a strange man. Failing in efforts to reach Mr. Arnold's throat, the man made a lunge with a knife which Mr. Arnold had seen him working to get from his pocket. Mr. Arnold felt the pain of the cut, but clung to the intruder, who, doubtless realizing that he had an athlete to deal with, twisted away and ran downstairs. Despite his wound, Mr. Arnold followed, which accounts for the blood found in the vestibule and for a short distance on the pavement, and which gave rise to the report that the assault had taken place outside his flat. Mr. Arnold does not understand how the struggle failed to attract attention from others in the building; he supposed, of course, he would meet help in the vestibule; but by odd chance the whole encounter was over during one of the short periods in which the entrance was empty. But Mr. Arnold was keenly observing and gave a good description of the man to the police —short, heavy-set, with a close, dark beard —and the police have a good clue. Mr. Arnold's wound is slight, but will confine him to the house for a short time.

I went upstairs to Cherry's door and raised my hand to knock. Then I dropped it, went to my own room, and shut myself in.

They had fixed it up. The two men together? Maybe—maybe Jeffrey Arnold alone. Anyway, it was fixed, and pretty well; even I, with visions before me, was almost convinced that I had not seen any loose, dangling legs. Fixed. And Cherry safe.

The scandal—the horror—the criminal court vanished. Heavens! How quick the world turns over!

Then I wondered if it had turned far enough for happiness again for her. I could not see how: safe, but she knew what she had said, and he knew it, too, and he was all intolerance. Nothing could alter that. Nothing could hide that. Maybe love might have done it, but there was not love enough for that—there was his arrogance—her long realization of it. Those two had battered Love and torn his wings—he could not get back to them. There was no love in the world as strong as that needed here.

I heard the front door crash and started up. Rodney. From the landing I saw him turn into the dining-room. I saw him clearly; he was untidy, strange. I went down at once; perhaps I could say a word; sometimes an outsider——

—unloved and sentimental me! I turned away. Across the hall, after a little, I could faintly hear their voices, but I did not go in until Cherry called me.

She was behind the coffee urn, chin up and head tilted; the morning paper with the picture of Jeffrey Arnold was on the floor; Rodney was getting into an overcoat.

"I'll hustle along," he

I went into the corridor and sat on the floor beside Cherry's door. I listened, and wondered in a frenzy of fear.

I looked across the room. Cherry had come down—he was on his knees, with her skirts gathered in both hands and crowded over his face—there were such sounds—did you ever hear a man cry? Then I saw Cherry's eyes. Dear God—the love in them!—eyes shining and deep and nearly black with it! It made me catch my breath

was saying. "'Morning, Lucy."

It was as usual. My heart beat fast. On what kind of a foundation did their lives stand—on something steadier and firmer than an old maid could know? I sat down, feeling a little dizzy—there was then, after all, a love stronger than all else. And I had seen it.

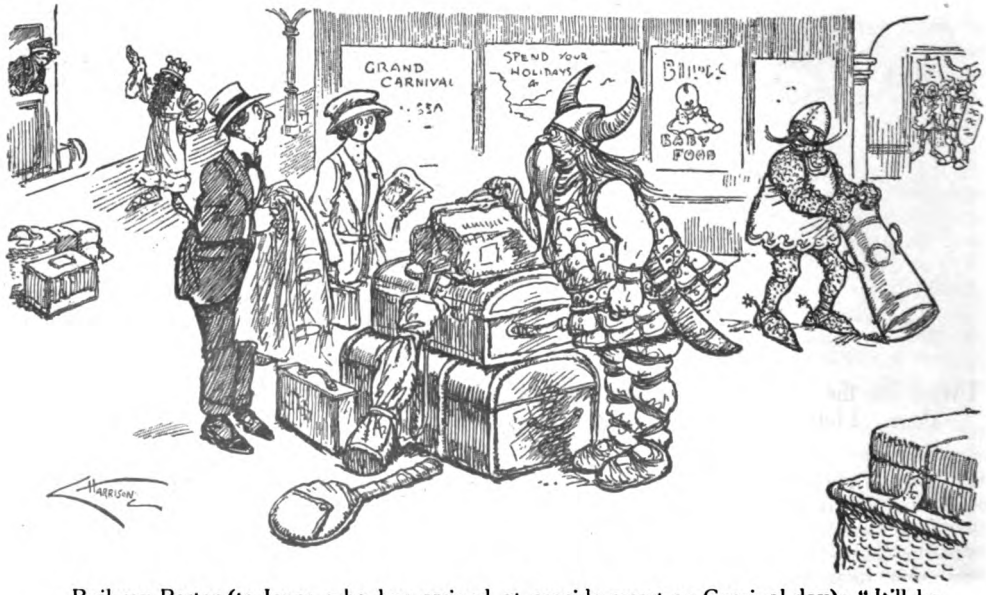
Holiday Humours

TO the professional humorists holiday time is harvest time indeed. The vicissitudes of the family man's fortnight by the sea provide a wealth of material for those who purvey laughter both in pictures and prose. Quite early in the season they start to poke fun at our illusions concerning the pleasures of holiday-making.

To begin with, they tell us of the feverish preliminaries which take place months before the vacation is due, the poring over guide-

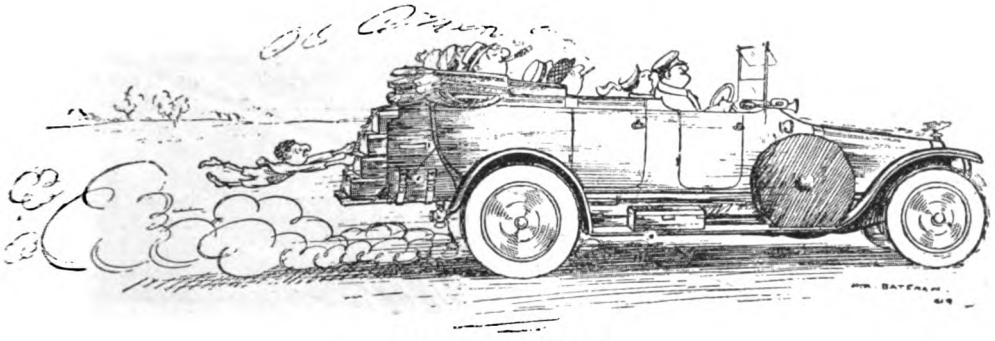
Mother: "Train's just goin' and I've got everythink but Alf. Where's Alf?"
Father: "Oh, lumme! *Was* there a Alf?"

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."



Railway Porter (to Jones, who has arrived at seaside resort on Carnival day): "It'll be a narrer squeak, sir, but I'll do my best to git yer luggidge down to the hotel before I takes part in the procession."

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."



THE STOWAWAY.

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

books and pamphlets, and the glib talk of a tour through Switzerland, or a trip to Paris or Nice—all of which generally culminate in the decision "Margate as usual." Then there is the ever-funny process of packing. The family trunk is crammed far beyond its reasonable capacity, and father is called in to exert his strength in order to strap it together. After half an hour's struggle he succeeds —only to discover that he has left his keys in the pocket of an old coat, which happens to be at the very bottom of the trunk. The trunk is unpacked and repacked, and the strapping process repeated, when mother decides that she cannot possibly travel in her best hat, but must wear her little felt one, which also happens to be at the bottom of the trunk. And so on. The problem of finding a kindly neighbour to take charge of the cat and the canary having been solved, and several other minor difficulties having been overcome, the family proceed to the station. They catch the train by a matter of seconds and are settling down for the journey to the coast when mother announces that she has forgotten to turn off the current from the electric iron, and that the whole house will be on fire. "Never

THE CHANGE.

Business.

Pleasure.

By permission of "The Bystander."

TRUE TO TRAINING.

"'Scuse me speaking with my mouth full, Ma, but Pa has just fallen off the pier!"

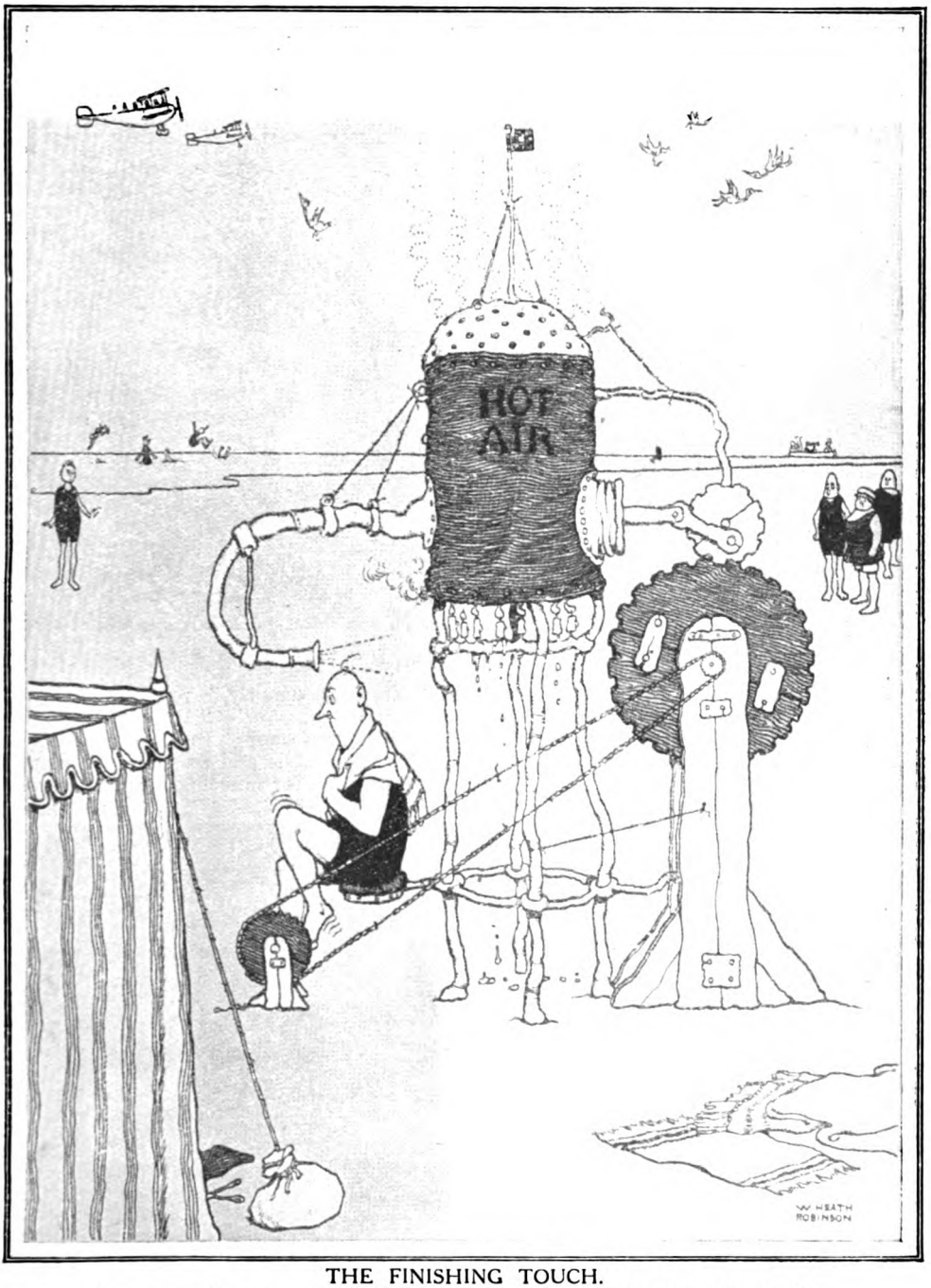
mind, my dear, don't worry," replies her husband, "nothing will burn for long—I've just remembered that I've left the tap running in the bathroom."

The Scotsman on holiday is also the subject of many a good story. Two who were sight-seeing in London saw a notice to the effect that during certain hours of the day passengers could travel by tram "All the way for twopence." "Shall we take a ride?" said one. "No," replied the other; "let's wait a bit. We're here for a fortnight, and there may be an excursion."

Another story of the stranger in London concerns two gentlemen from Yorkshire who put up at a big hotel. After being shown their rooms they were going down to dine, and were peering about a dark passage in search of the stairs, when they came to an open lift-shaft. The first one, seeing the lights below, stepped out boldly and

"The beach, with its thousands of happy faces, presented an animated scene."—*Any Press report from Anywhere-on-Sea.*

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."



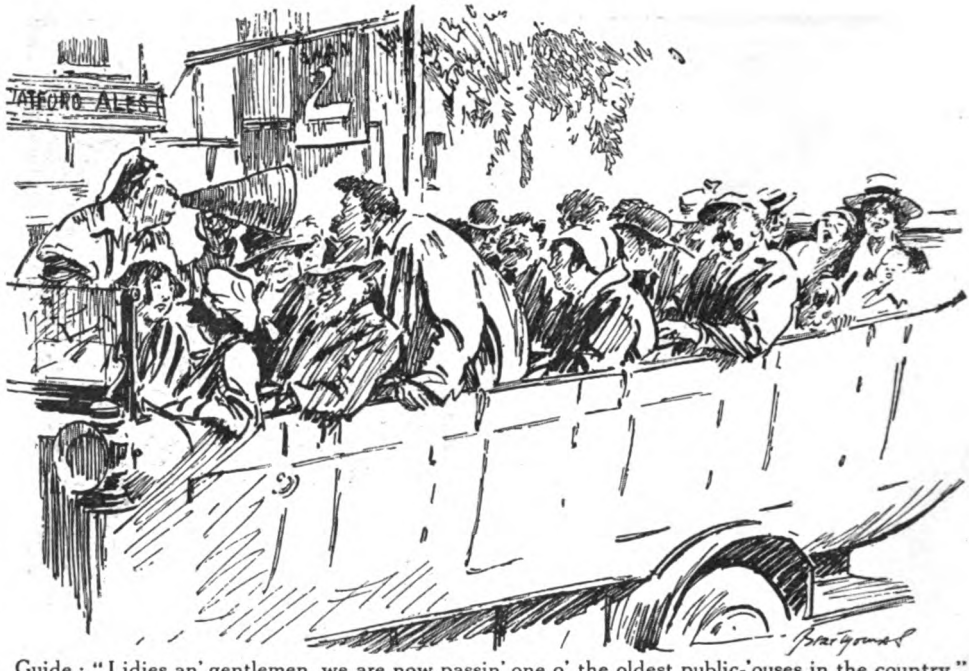
THE FINISHING TOUCH.

A new machine erected on Margate sands for drying the hair after bathing.

By permission of "The Bystander."

fell with a crash. "Hi, lad, are you all right?" shouted his friend. "Aye," came the feeble reply, "but mind that first step—it's a beast."

There are several stories dealing with the discomforts of seaside apartment houses. A well-known composer is responsible for the following. A musician told his



Guide : "Lidies an' gentlemen, we are now passin' one o' the oldest public-'ouses in the country."
Passenger : "Wot for ?"

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

landlady that he had had a terrible night on account of the noise which her cat had made. "Oh," said the landlady with a toss of her head, "and I suppose you are going to ask me to have the poor thing killed ?"

"No, not exactly," replied the mild-mannered *maestro*. "But perhaps you would be good enough to have it tuned."

The promenade and seashore are equally good settings for amusing stories. A very

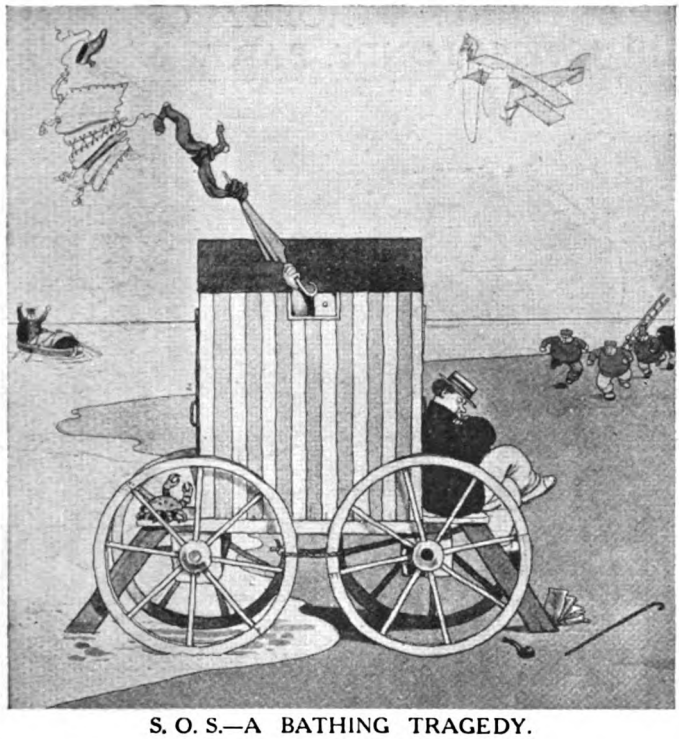
SOMETHING'S BUST.

musical young man was strolling along by the bandstand with a charming girl, when the town band commenced to murder the "Soldiers' Chorus" from "Faust."

"I simply adore this piece," said the girl; "tell me, what is it out of?"

"Tune," replied the musical one, laconically.

The only form of holiday that the poor little children of the slums are able to enjoy is an occasional day's outing to the country, under the auspices of some charitable organization. There is a story told of one of these youngsters who saw a lark for the first time. "Look!" he exclaimed. "There's a sparrer up there, an' 'e can't get up an' 'e can't get down—and 'e ain't 'alf 'ollering!" Another of these children came across a heap of rusty old condensed milk tins. "Teacher," he shouted, "I've found a cow's nest!"



S. O. S.—A BATHING TRAGEDY.

By permission of "The Bystander."

Despite the truth that lies behind the mild cynicism of the humorist, the average holiday-maker knows how to make the most of his time. There may be heavy bills to pay—so heavy, in fact, that one man is said to have told his landlady that he was glad she had enjoyed his holiday—and when the summer season is closed, and every board-residence is once more occupied by bored residents, there may be murmurs of "Never again" from the father of the family.

A few weeks later, however, the trivial inconveniences are forgotten and only the happy memories remain. We may be certain that, at the end of another twelve months, the entire family will be eagerly looking forward once again to "Margate as usual."

THE RETURN FROM THE HOLIDAY.

"Oh, Harold, we forgot to tell the baker we were going away, and that boy of his is so unimaginative."

By permission of the Proprietors of "Punch."

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—5.

THE TENANT OF THE LIGHTHOUSE

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

COLONEL SIR FRANCIS WORTON, K.C.B., D.S.O., sometimes known as Q 20—the abbreviated designation of the Home Secret Service Department, which he had so successfully inaugurated—stretched himself out in Daniel Rocke's easy-chair and broached a subject which, to a man possessed of less self-confidence, might have presented embarrassments.

"Daniel," he confided, "I admire your secretary immensely."

"The devil you do!" Daniel replied, startled out of his habitual nonchalance.

"I like her manners," Sir Francis continued, "I like her appearance, I like her taste in clothes, and I adore the way she does her hair."

"Am I to understand, as you are making me the recipient of these confidences," Daniel inquired, taking off his glasses and wiping them, "that you are contemplating asking me for her hand in marriage?"

"Don't be an ass!" was the prompt reply. "In the first place, if I wanted to marry her, I should ask her, and not you. And in the second place, I am, as you know, a confirmed old bachelor. I was thinking of inviting her to lunch."

"Why not? Windergate was less punctilious. He used to take her out without asking me."

Sir Francis was visibly annoyed. Windergate had been his subordinate for many years, and there appeared to be something unseemly in the situation.

"Does he want to marry her?" he inquired.

"As a matter of fact," Daniel confided, "I don't think Windergate or anybody else will have much of a look in just yet. I remember telling you her history. She is the daughter of the first man whom Londe did away with—the first we know of, that is to say. She doesn't think much of any of us for not having brought him to book before this. It was because she thought she had a chance of taking a hand in the game that she left the F.O. and came here to me."

Sir Francis nodded.

"I am not sure that I blame her for being a little disappointed," he observed, maliciously. "You've had that fellow cornered two or three times, and allowed him to get away. Windergate never ought to have let him slip through his fingers when he had him run to earth in that house on Salisbury Plain. Not your fault, of course. You're not a detective. You're supposed to use your brains in the matter and leave the executive part to the proper department. Windergate appears to have behaved like a village bumpkin."

Daniel smiled.

"You have never been up against a lunatic, have you?" he asked.

"A lunatic?" Sir Francis repeated. "That ought to make it all the easier."

"You obviously haven't studied the finer lights of criminology," Daniel remarked, dryly. "A clever man who is mad on one

Copyright, 1923, by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

point, and one only, is the most dangerous person in the world to tackle. I'd back the subtlety of his brain in all matters except the one against yours or mine."

"I should certainly accept the challenge," Sir Francis declared, with a smile which only just escaped being patronizing.

"You can accept it whenever you like,' was the calm reply. "Londe is wanted, as you know, for several murders, and also by the Lunacy Commissioners. He is staying, at the present moment, at the Magnificent Hotel at Shoreborough."

There was a brief pause. Worton failed to grasp the situation.

"What the devil do you mean?" he demanded.

"Precisely what I have said."

"But if you know that he is there, why aren't you doing something about it?"

It was Daniel's turn to smile ironically.

"We did something about it each time before," he reminded his Chief, "and somehow or other we didn't quite get our hands upon Londe. This time we must alter our tactics a little. We must go more warily. I am convinced that he is at the Magnificent, 'from information received,' as Windergate would put it. But the most certain thing on earth is that if either Miss Lancaster, Windergate, or I were to put in an appearance there, he'd be off before we had even looked in the visitors' book."

"How did you come by your information?" Sir Francis not unnaturally inquired.

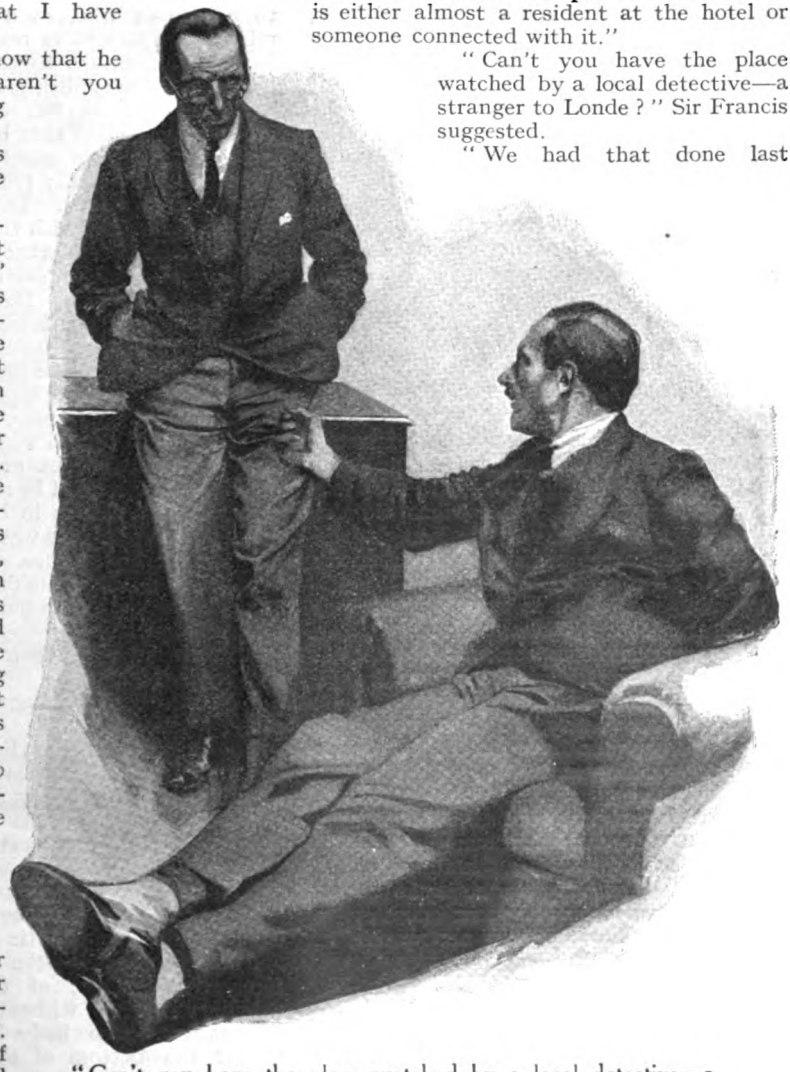
"Windergate, of course, is shrewd enough so far as he goes," Daniel admitted. "He discovered some time back that Londe *will* have the *Lancet* every week, and *will* have it sent to him direct. He's been on the wrong track once or twice in hunting down mysterious subscribers. This time, however, I rather think the finger points the right way. The *Lancet* is being sent to the Magnificent to a Dr. Benson. No such person is known there, yet the paper is always claimed."

"The assumption being, I suppose——"

"That someone enters the office at a moment when there is no one about and takes the paper out of the rack," Daniel interrupted. "The conclusion one must arrive at is that the pseudo Dr. Benson is either almost a resident at the hotel or someone connected with it."

"Can't you have the place watched by a local detective—a stranger to Londe?" Sir Francis suggested.

"We had that done last



"Can't you have the place watched by a local detective—a stranger to Londe?" Sir Francis suggested.

week," Daniel replied, a little wearily. "The *Lancet* disappeared just the same."

Sir Francis held out his hand.

"Pass me the 'A B C,'" he begged. "It is time I took a hand in the game."

"If you are successful," Daniel observed, "there will be no trouble about that luncheon so far as Miss Lancaster is concerned."

SIR FRANCIS made not the slightest secret of his visit to the Magnificent at Shoreborough. He booked his rooms under his own name, went to great pains to procure the window table he desired, made an absurd fuss about an imaginary game leg, walked always with a stick, sat outside all the morning reading the papers, talked to everyone in the lounge about the wonderful air, and played bridge in the afternoons at one of the clubs. His plans were well made, and no one would have surmised that his valet was an experienced detective and that he had in his sitting-room a copy of the *dossiers* of each guest who had stayed in the hotel during the last month. At the end of three days he was prepared to scoff at the idea of Londe's being, or having been at any recent period, a visitor there. On the psychological day, however, the Thursday, when the *Lancet* was delivered, there was a dramatic change in the situation. The copy of the paper was surreptitiously removed from the pigeon-hole in which it had been placed, notwithstanding the vigilance of three or four people, and the waiter, a young Frenchman, who had served Sir Francis, was picked up at the bottom of the cliffs, a mile or so out of the town, with a broken neck and sundry very suspicious wounds in the back of his head. Sir Francis paid a brief visit to the police-station, asked for his bill, and telephoned to Daniel.

"I am coming up to town for an hour by the eleven-forty," he announced. "You had better arrange to come back with me. Windergate is on his way down and I want to bring another man I know of."

"I will be ready," Daniel promised. "Pity you seem to have let the fellow slip through your fingers."

"Eleven-forty," Sir Francis repeated. "I'll come straight round to see you after I have called for a moment at my rooms."

Sir Francis, however, neither called upon Daniel that day nor returned to his rooms, and within twenty-four hours every newspaper in London was announcing in prominent head-lines :—

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE
OF A
WELL-KNOWN GOVERNMENT
OFFICIAL.

Worton spent the first of those feverish days following his disappearance in pain, discomfort, and fear. He had a blurred but more or less connected recollection of his taxicab having been stopped in a block of vehicles at the entrance to the station; of a man putting his head in at the open window as though to ask a question; of a faint odour, followed by an amazing paralysis of mind and body. He did as he was told weakly and tremblingly. Assisted by his guide he stepped out of the vehicle, entered the station, passed across the bridge to the arrival platform, left the station again, entered a closed motor-car, and was driven rapidly away. His guide had taken the seat by the chauffeur, and he found himself next to a woman who, even in those blurred minutes, he seemed to realize was beautiful. He found strength to ask her a faltering question. She smiled, patted his hand, and made an evasive but encouraging reply. He had the feeling that he must have been taken ill and was slowly recovering consciousness. Presently the car left the road for a narrow lane. They bumped their way across a field with the sea in full view, and stopped before what appeared to be a lighthouse—a white-plastered, round building. A lighthouse! The whole thing was too ridiculous. There followed a period of further oblivion.

When once more he recovered consciousness he was lying on a plain hard mattress in a small circular room, with whitewashed walls and ceiling, and with the only window high up and far out of reach. His first impressions were that he really had met with an accident and was in hospital. Looking down at him critically was a keen-faced man of powerful appearance. His clothes were covered by a long white duster. By his side stood the woman who had ridden with him from the station.

"Where am I?" Worton gasped. "What has happened?"

"You are in good hands," was the calm reply. "Lie still."

The tenant of the lighthouse stooped down and felt the prostrate man's pulse. Then he turned to the woman.

"Most annoying," he declared. "An absolutely perfect subject."

Then the whole truth came like a swaying flood of horror to the man who lay there powerless. These two could be no others than Londe, the lunatic butcher surgeon, and his lunatic wife—the murderers of Miss Lancaster's father, of the travellers on Salisbury Plain; without doubt, too, of the waiter whose body had been picked up at the bottom of this very range of cliffs. He was in their power. This rude apartment was to be their operating

Presently the car stopped before what appeared to be a lighthouse—a white-plastered, round building.

chamber. He felt himself in the clutches of chill fear.

"Where the devil am I, and what do you want with me?" he gasped.

"I will explain," the other replied, courteously. "I am Sir Joseph Londe, the Australian surgeon, of whom you must have heard. I saved thousands of lives in the war—I and the lady here, who was my head nurse and who is now my wife. Unfortunately, although I am a strong man, the strain was too great for me. I went mad."

"Mad!" Sir Francis muttered mechanically.

"Precisely. One little corner of my brain alone is affected—a matter of discoloration. I need a small transfusion of what is vulgarly called 'grey matter'—the very smallest quantity you can imagine. Yet believe me, my dear sir, I find it almost an impossible thing to discover a brain which will afford me just what I want."

Sir Francis prayed for strength, prayed that, after his life of bravery, he might not end it a coward. The weariness was still in his limbs.

"Why have you chosen me for a subject?" he demanded.

"Because you are a clever man," was the prompt reply, "and I should say a remarkably sane one. Also because you and your friend Rocke are becoming a little troublesome to me. I nearly had a look at Rocke's brain once, but a girl stepped in. It was a pity."

"You know that this is murder?" Worton muttered, dimly aware all the time of the futility of his question.

"That is a most ignorant and absurd remark," Londe retorted, with some signs of anger. "I have saved thousands of lives. Surely I have a right to one or two when it is a question of restoring one of the greatest intellects in the surgical world. All that I require is a man's brain free from any red patch. I have great hopes of yours."

Sir Francis was slowly recovering his courage.

"My brain," he declared, "is covered with red patches."

"I don't believe it," was the firm rejoinder. "You are not the sort of man to have a discoloured brain. Judith! Can you see anything yet?"

The woman, who had been standing at the window, turned away.

"Nothing," she answered.

Londe's face was black with momentary anger. He looked down apologetically at his prospective victim.

"You resent this delay without a doubt," he observed. "So do I. The fact is, there has been such a fuss in the newspapers and amongst the police about a recent subject of mine, upon whom I experimented a few days ago, that my wife thought it as well to conceal my surgical instruments for a short time. I have sent for them, however, and they ought to be here at any moment."

"Will you tell me," Sir Francis asked, "what that accursed stuff is that you used upon me at the station? It seems to have taken all my strength away."

Londe smiled complacently.

"The use of that stuff, as you call it," he declared, "will in due course be proclaimed as the greatest scientific discovery of the war era. I am leaving the formula to the College of Surgeons, when I have finished with it. With a single whiff I can make a baby of the strongest man—he has no will and very little strength. With a double whiff it becomes a perfect and marvellous anæsthetic. When operating on you, for instance, you will feel nothing—two whiffs and then eternity."

"Most consoling," Worton muttered.

LONDE joined his wife for a moment at the window. Then he turned towards the door.

"I have some indifferent implements in an old case," he confided. "I will examine them. Make yourself comfortable, Sir Francis, until my return. Judith!"

He left the room and the woman turned slowly away from the window. She came to the side of the couch and looked down at her husband's prisoner meditatively. Notwithstanding a certain air of anxiety, she was a very beautiful and a very attractive woman. Sir Francis tried to keep the horror from his eyes. She was after all a human being. There must be a weak spot somewhere.

"You can't mean to stand by and see your husband commit murder," he pleaded.

She seemed puzzled.

"I have stood by while he has done his work a hundred times," she replied. "Many died. They did not call it murder then."

"But that was when they would have died anyhow, if the operation had not succeeded," he reminded her. "I am not wounded. What have I done that he should help himself to my life?"

"He gave his reason and mind for your countrymen," she pointed out. "It is only fair that one of them should repay him. But wait."

She held up her finger and listened for a moment. On the floor below they could hear Londe's restless movements. She leaned towards the helpless man.

"I will show you something," she whispered.

She crossed the room and lifted up a pile of sacking which lay in the corner. Underneath was a long black case, on which was a silver shield.

"What is that?" he demanded.

She raised the lid, took something out from the case, and turned towards him with a smile. She held out a short but deadly-looking knife. A ray of fugitive sunshine fell upon its blue, highly-tempered blade.

"The case of surgical instruments," she confided. "He thinks I sent them away. I didn't. I hid them here."

A gleam of hope restored Sir Francis's courage. Perhaps after all, then, this woman was human.

"Put it back quickly," he begged. "Your husband might come in."

She obeyed him and replaced the matting with elaborate carelessness.

"You do not wish me to be butchered, then?" he asked, eagerly.

The slightest of frowns disturbed the serenity of her beautiful countenance.

"It is not that," she explained. "I think that my husband has the right to do whatever he chooses in order to regain his reason, but there is always such a fuss afterwards."

"A fuss?" he repeated, weakly.

She nodded.

"Yes. Everyone is against us. Everyone objects. We have to go into hiding and it is so uncomfortable. I hate living in strange places and wandering about like shadows. I want a house in the country with a garden where there are a great many rose trees. I want to take care of them like children, to spray them and prune them and talk to them every morning. Some day the blossoms will come. Then I shall christen them all separately. I shall know them all by name. That will be wonderful."

Worton felt his strength slowly returning. He sat up on the couch.

"Of course, you realize that you, too, are mad?" he asked, bluntly.

As the words left his lips he knew that he had made a stupid and unpardonable mistake. Her beautiful mouth parted into ugly lines, her eyes shot fire, her silken eyebrows became one long menacing line. It was significant that her tone was not raised.

"You have insulted me," she declared. "You will be sorry."

She looked towards the door. He rose to his feet unsteadily, but with rapidly growing strength.

"Forgive me," he begged. "I can't imagine what I was thinking about to say such a thing. That infernal drug took away my wits as well as my strength."

She paused irresolutely and looked at him. Notwithstanding his dishevelled appearance he was a very good-looking man.

"You call me mad," she said, lowering her voice a little and holding the latch of the door in her hand, "yet it is you who are a fool. You seem to want your life, yet you insult *me—me* who could give it to you. You do not plead with me, you do not try soft words. I let a man go free once for the sake of a kiss that pleased me. Joseph was very angry, but he never knew about the kiss."

Worton made an effort.

"You are very beautiful," he sighed, "but I am a drugged man. If you look at me like that I shall not care whether you give me my life or not, so long as I have the kiss."

She laughed, and the anger passed from her face. She turned towards him.

"For one moment," she murmured, "I will see how it seems to feel your arms around me. If it pleases me—you shall live."

Something helped him—a touch of man's passion for the unusual, perhaps. He held her in his arms and their lips met. A moment later she drew away, gracefully and with reluctance. Her cheeks were flushed. She laughed at him kindly.

"I will do my best," she promised. "You shall live."

ALMOST immediately they heard Londe's footsteps upon the stairs. He came in, bearing an open case in his hand. He laid it down upon a chair.

"I fear that I shall have to apologize for my apparent clumsiness," he said, turning towards his prisoner with a knife in his hands. "These are very inferior affairs. Fortunately, however, you will not realize the difference."

Worton stepped backwards. He saw the black tube protruding from the other's waistcoat pocket and the fingers stealing towards it.

"Why not wait for the others?" he suggested.

Londe shook his head.

"I have waited all day," he replied. "I shall wait no longer. They are making such a terrible fuss about you in the papers, too. It is time we were away."

The woman laid her hand upon his arm.

"You are absurd," she remonstrated. "Don't you realize that when this man's body is found, a report will be made on the wounds in his head by an English doctor—an *English* doctor, mind! Do you want to lose your great reputation? You shall not! I forbid it!"

He hesitated for a moment. Then he threw down the knife gloomily.

"I wish to Heaven I had never let you send the other case away," he muttered.

He walked up and down the room furiously, his hands in his pockets, pausing every now and then to look impatiently out of the window. He drew nearer and nearer to the pile of matting. The other two watched him with fascinated eyes. The sight of the untidy heap seemed to irritate him. Impatiently he gave it a savage kick. The case was disclosed. He threw himself upon it with the cry of a wild animal. Then he turned round, holding it under his arm. He moved a step nearer to the man and woman who watched him. One hand already held the black tube. The fingers of the other were stealing towards the fastening of the case.

TELEPHONE, telegraph, and sixty h.p. Rolls-Royce worked together for the life of Sir Francis Worton, K.C.B., D.S.O. Daniel Rocke and Windergate, Captain Milton, the Chief Constable of the County, and the manager of the Hotel Magnificent met together in conference in the latter's office within a few hours of the time when Worton's disappearance had become an established fact.

"The taxicab driver?" was Daniel's first question.

"A most respectable man, owning his own cab," the Chief Constable declared. "He has had an unblemished licence for seventeen years, first as a cab and now as a taxicab driver. Ask him all the questions you like from an informative point of view, but don't waste time with him. All that he knows is that his fare was spoken to, apparently by an acquaintance, whom he cannot describe, at the entrance to the station; that he must have descended without his noticing the fact; and that he never saw him again."

"We will accept that," Daniel decided. "Now with regard to the station officials?"

"They have been thoroughly rounded up," the other assured him, "but very little information has been gained. It was a busy time and all we have been able to gather is that the two men probably left the station by the south entrance and entered a car on the other side. We are doing our best to trace all the cars present that morning."

"Too slow for us, these methods, although they, of course, are necessary," Daniel admitted. "We must begin at the other end. About this young waiter who was murdered? When is the inquest?"

"To-morrow," Captain Milton replied.

"Is there any unusual evidence to be offered?"

The Chief Constable nodded.

"In a way there is," he assented. "The young man had evidently come into possession of money lately. He appears to have bought a bicycle and a good many new clothes. He took a ride most afternoons."

"Always in the same direction?" Daniel asked, eagerly.

"Precisely. The direction of West Shoreborough."

"Can we have the head waiter in?"

That functionary was summoned. The Chief Constable coughed.

"You will excuse my pointing out, Mr. Rocke," he ventured, "that it is the disappearance of Sir Francis Worton which we are investigating."

Daniel nodded.

"We are going backwards for reasons I will explain to you presently," he replied. "I am only interested in saving my Chief's life, and there isn't any time to spare. The murderer of that young man is also the abductor of Sir Francis."

The head waiter made his appearance. Daniel asked him questions with almost lightning-like rapidity.

"How many tables had William Morton, the young waiter who was murdered, to look after?"

"Eight, sir. In the very busy season, nine."

"Can you remember any occupant of any of the tables looked after by him, who seemed to take a special interest in the young man?"

The waiter reflected.

"There was a middle-aged gentleman staying here—I think he must have been a doctor—who used to give him extra tips and talk to him a great deal. He had an invalid wife who never left her sitting-room. This was some weeks ago, though."

"Name, please, and why did you think he was a doctor?" Daniel asked, drawing on his coat.

"The gentleman's name was Fox, sir, and I thought he might be a doctor because he read the *Lancet* a good deal."

Daniel waved him away.

"Which house-agent does the most business on the western outskirts of the town?" he asked the Chief Constable, abruptly.

"Fellows and Company," was the wondering reply. "They have a branch office just outside."

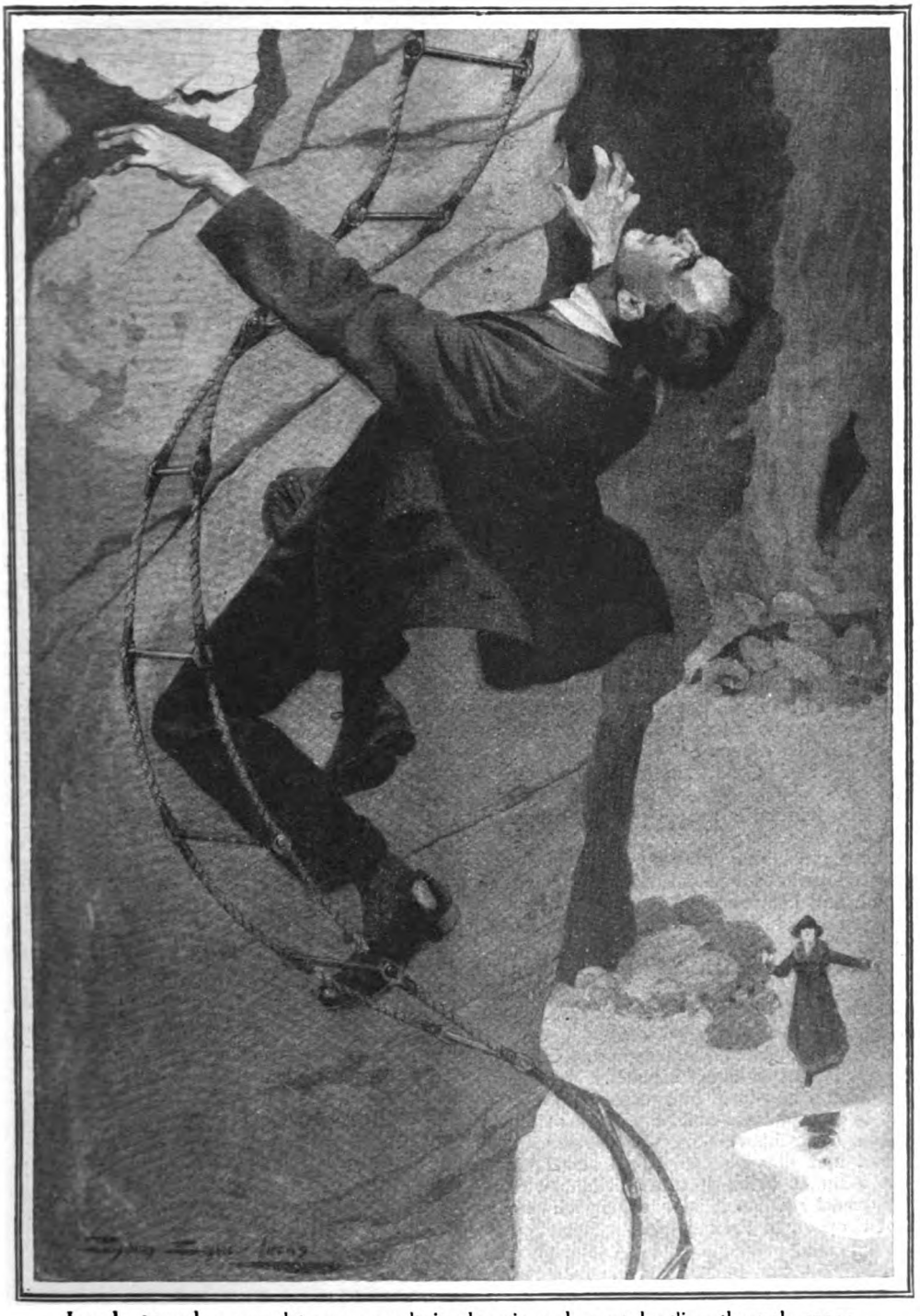
"Quick as you can, please, gentlemen," Daniel begged, leading the way from the room. "We're overdue at that branch office!"

THE final scene possessed a little drama of its own. As they bumped across the rough road down to the lighthouse, recently let on lease to a Mr. and Mrs. Fox, they saw a wild-looking figure stagger from the doorway and make his way to the edge of the cliff. He had on neither coat, waistcoat, nor collar; his hair was unkempt, his footsteps unsteady. They tumbled out of the car and rushed towards him.

"Thank God, you're safe!" Daniel exclaimed. "Where's Londe? Where are they?"

Sir Francis pointed downwards with trembling forefinger. On the sands, hundreds of feet below, a woman was standing, looking upwards. Behind her, a few yards from land, a powerfully-built petrol launch was moving slowly about, and in mid-air, already some way down, a man was descending a thin rope ladder. Daniel's eyes flashed as he pointed to him.

"There's the man you want, sir," he cried,



Londe turned a complete somersault in the air and went hurtling through space.

fiercely. "There's the man who murdered that young waiter and——"

"And, by God, he nearly had me!" Sir Francis interrupted.

Captain Milton smiled as he looked over the cliff.

"A clever idea, this escape, I suppose," he remarked, indulgently, "although a trifle melodramatic—more suited for a cinema stunt than real life. They can go off in that launch in whatever direction they like and as far as their petrol will take them, but they can no more escape now than if the handcuffs were already upon their wrists. Every coastguard station, harbour-master, and lighthouse-keeper within a hundred miles will have their description within half an hour. Take the car and start work, Stedman," he directed, turning to the inspector who had accompanied him. "Mr. Windergate had better go with you. You can send something back for us."

The man saluted and hurried off. Suddenly a dust-covered figure sprang from a station taxicab and staggered towards them. It was Ann, breathless and white with excitement.

"Where is he?" she demanded.

Daniel took her by the arm and pointed downwards. Londe was nearly half-way down now and descending with incredible rapidity. She gave one glance at him and pointed to the grappling hooks of the ladder.

"Why do you stand here and do nothing?" she cried, furiously. "Do you want him to escape?"

The Chief Constable remained unperturbed.

"The handcuffs are as good as upon his wrists," he assured her.

Ann gave one glance at Daniel and pointed towards the steel hooks of the ladder, which had been secured to the remains of a wooden bench. Daniel nodded and took a quick step forward.

"You may be right," he muttered, "but I've seen that man escape when the odds were a hundred to one against him. Why take any risks?"

The Chief Constable frowned. Officially he felt bound to assert himself.

"That's murder," he protested.

"Is it?" was Daniel's vicious comment as he flung himself on the ground. "If I had met him face to face I should have put a bullet through him without waiting for questions. As it is—we'll try a hundred-feet drop on to the shingle."

"And God bless you for it!" Ann sobbed.

Daniel wrenched away the grappling-irons and the ladder collapsed. They leaned over the edge of the cliff. Londe seemed for a moment to fall backwards, making desperate efforts to clutch at the scrub and fragments of rock jutting out from the face of the cliff. Then he turned a complete somersault in the air and went hurtling through space. They could almost hear the thud with which he fell. He lay spread-eagled upon the pebbles, motionless and still.

"Good work," Daniel declared, savagely. "Let's get down and look at him. There's a pathway a little farther along."

It was one of the few wild moments of Daniel Rocke's admirably-controlled life. He felt a soft, warm hand in his. Ann's face was aflame with exultation. Her eyes adored him. Then a wondering cry from Milton and an oath from Sir Francis brought them once more to the edge of the cliff. They looked down. No one seemed able to find any words. Londe was on his feet. He was walking towards the boat, walking slowly but without unsteadiness. By his side was the woman, moving across the sands with slim and effortless grace. A thick-set man, with a south-wester pulled over his forehead, held out his hand from the boat and she sprang in with the light buoyancy of a girl. Londe walked calmly through the waves and followed her over the side. Already the engine was at work. They were heading for the open sea. Man and woman stood together, looking up at the cliff top. Their expressions were undistinguishable. They made no gesture or movement. Then the woman turned and entered the cabin. The boat still proceeded oceanwards, travelling at an amazing pace. Londe moved to the prow and remained there, dark and sombre, his back turned towards the land, his face to the horizon. He was like Columbus with a still undiscovered world before him.

"AN eighty-feet drop," Daniel muttered, "and he fell on his back!"

The Chief Constable looked downwards superciliously. He was still entirely self-assured.

"He probably has internal injuries," he remarked. "In any case I have given orders that they are to be brought back to Shoreborough."

(Another thrilling story in this series will appear next month.)

THE KIDNAPPED "GENERAL"

by

STACY AUMONIER

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

JIM PARKER and I climbed a stile, walked a hundred yards along a sandy road, and came out on to a glorious common. The common was dotted with clumps of furze, gorse bushes, and beeches. Here and there a sandy pit broke the normal level of the landscape.

The origin of these weekly rambles of ours had been a mutual antipathy to golf. Paying the usual physical penalties of men who lead sedentary lives, we had each been advised by different doctors "to take up golf." Now golf may be an excellent game——

I'm not going to argue about it. We did experiment, and lost an enormous number of balls in an incredibly short space of time, but the insistent admonition: "Ah, old man, what you ought to do is to play golf," got on our nerves. We met in solemn conclave, and vowed that we would *not* be bullied into playing golf. Eventually we decided to absorb the benefits of golf without undergoing the nervous strain of chasing that absurd little white ball.

We rambled far afield. On this occasion we were just over the border in Buckinghamshire. Jim Parker sighed.

"I wonder they haven't turned this into one of their beastly golf courses," he said.

"Touch wood," I answered. "We're not across it yet." But no, there was no golf course on this nameless common It was a delightful and deserted spot. We walked across it for half a mile, when we came to a kind of dingle formed by the opening into a long, narrow sand-pit. We were just passing it when Jim remarked:—

"There's a queer habitation for you!"

I looked in the direction his stick was pointing, and beheld half-way up the dingle an odd-looking shanty in red and white.

"Um," I answered. "Let's go and have a look at it."

We entered the dingle and approached the rustic dwelling. At first it appeared to be a double-storeyed cabin painted rather gaily, with pots of flowers hanging from a balcony. On closer inspection the truth became apparent. On the lower part of the dwelling, dim but quite perceptible, was the word "General." It was an old converted "General" motor-bus! The owner had certainly been rather clever about it. The wheels had either been removed or were buried in the sand. The lower part remained practically intact, except for a surrounding wooden platform. The upper part had been roofed in with timber, and a balcony built out, supported by wooden posts. The woodwork was painted white; there were chintz curtains at the windows, and flowers in profusion in pots and tubs. A gay little dwelling. It was, I suppose, deplorably bad manners for Jim Parker and me to stand there and laugh. But there was something about the association of the "General" with this obscure and picturesque retreat that was irresistible. We were still laughing when a man came out on to the lower platform and regarded us. He was a tall, strongly-built man, with a neat, pointed brown beard, close-cropped hair turning grey, cold blue eyes, and the skin of a man who lives in the open. He bowed to us gravely, and said:—

"Good morning, gentlemen."

Copyright, 1923, by Stacy Aumonier.

We pulled ourselves together and responded. Then he added:—

"I presume they have sent you from the inn to hear the story of the kidnapped General?"

It was the time of day when it was pleasant to hear that there was an inn in the offing, but we explained that we had come from the opposite direction, and that we were merely explorers, trying to escape from the tyranny of social custom. We had no intention of invading his privacy, but nevertheless the story of the kidnapped General promised an entertaining diversion.

"Come and sit on this bench in the shade," said the sturdy individual. "I regret I have no liquid refreshment to offer you, other than water. My medical advisers——" He waved his hand in the direction of the dwelling as though the position explained itself. We all sat down and lighted our pipes.

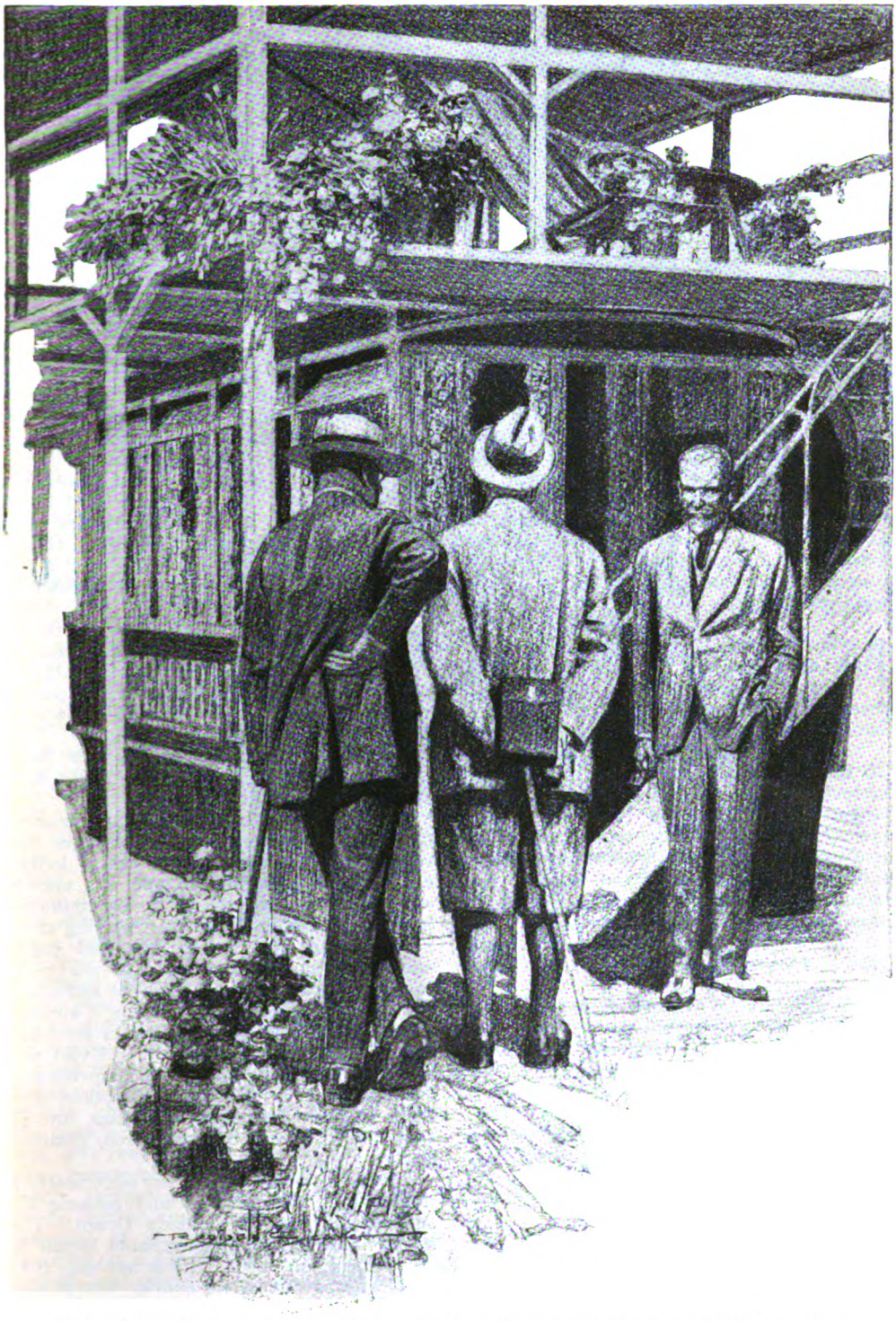
"MY name is McGregor," he said quite simply—"William McGregor, but the story of the kidnapped General circles round the character of one Ronny Skinner—Captain Ronald Skinner of the Royal Engineers. Skinner his name was, but the boys called him Grinner. He was that—essentially. He was a man who grinned through life. He grinned through triumph and through disaster. He grinned through battle and when things went wrong. He grinned even when he was bullied or betrayed. He was an irrepressible grinner. A stocky, merry, jolly chunk of a man who never had any luck, except that he always managed to escape with his life. His war record would probably bore you, it was like so many others. He was up to his neck in it the first week, temporarily attached to the R.F.A. as a motor-bike despatch rider. He was a wonderful chauffeur, and could drive any car. You may remember at that time they sent the despatch riders out in couples, one without lights carrying the despatches, the other lighted up as a decoy. Ronny was always the decoy. The war had only been on for five weeks when one night a shell blew his front wheel to pieces. He was captured by the Germans. He spent nine months in a concentration camp at Cassel. I believe he even grinned there. And then one day he and another man escaped, and got across the border into Switzerland. He reported and went back into the line. Does this bore you?"

"Not at all—most interesting," Jim Parker and I both interjected.

"He was over a year in Belgium, and he grinned when they removed a piece of shrapnel from the fleshy part of his thigh. 'Dashed lucky it didn't hit the bone,' he said. He grinned when they sent him to Salonika, and kept him hanging about for nine months in a fever-stricken marsh, playing football and cracking lice in his shirt. He even grinned in Gallipoli when the flood came and carried all his kit away, and he was eaten up by savage flying things and poisonous growing things. He didn't grin much when he really got the fever because he was unconscious most of the time. But he grinned when he found himself in a clean bed at Imbros. 'Golly! this is fine!' he said, and he hurried up to get well. He wrote to his girl in England. Did I tell you there was a girl? No? Why, yes, there's generally a girl. She was a pretty girl, the daughter of a wealthy provision merchant living quite near here. They were not officially engaged. He had very little money, and he had only just started his career when the war came. The father would not sanction it, and there was no mother. I can't tell you what he wrote to her, or what she wrote to him. But when her letters came he used to grin contentedly, so one assumes the girl was staunch. They sent him off to Egypt after that for another sixteen months and then back to Blighty. Jemini! didn't he grin when he saw the old white cliffs again! But that wasn't for long, mind you. In another month he was in France again.

"The fellow went through everything, right up to the retreat in March, 1918, and then the turn of the tide in July. Except for that one wound in his thigh he was never touched. When the end came he was in the army of occupation on the Rhine, grinning at the Boche housewives, and helping them hang out their clothes to air. And then they demobbed him and sent him back to England. In the meantime his father, who was an architectural sculptor, was ruined by the war. The old man had gone bankrupt, and was living with a married sister, not much better off than himself. There was no one to help the boy.

"When the war started Ronny was nineteen. He was now nearly twenty-five, and he had had no training. He could do nothing except drive a car. London was flooded with unemployed ex-service men who could drive cars. He had to get a job anyway, and he went about grinning into all kinds of offices and warehouses. Nobody wanted him. The war was over, and the great need now was economy and retrenchment. The girl was still writing to him, and so he went on grinning and hoping. But the girl's father forbade him to enter the house. He had made a lot of money during the war, and he wasn't going to have



"Good morning, gentlemen. I presume they have sent you from the inn to hear the story of the kidnapped General."

his daughter thrown away on a penniless, out-of-work loafer. His God, no, he wasn't.

"I don't know how Skinner eventually managed to get the job he did. Things must have been getting pretty desperate, but one day he blossomed out into a beautiful blue uniform with white piping and large black buttons. He was a driver on a London General motor-bus. And there he was sitting up in his box, grinning for all he was worth, responding to the clang of the bell, swerving through the traffic in a most skilful way. The company recognized that he was a good driver, and he was very popular in the yard among the other men. One day he received quite a promotion. There was a special motor-bus that used to leave South Hampstead at five minutes to nine in the morning and run express to the City—no stop. They charged a shilling per skull for the trip, and it was very popular amongst stockbrokers and City merchants. The bus was always full, and the men were allowed to smoke inside. There was an express return journey in the evening at five-thirty. To Ronny Skinner fell the great honour of driving this bus. The conductor was a man named Eyles, and they were great pals."

MR. McGREGOR paused and looked at us, as though anxious to check the impression of his story on our faces. The impression apparently satisfied him, for he proceeded.

"I am now coming to the amazing crisis of this affair, which, although not kept secret, was never satisfactorily treated, or truthfully chronicled in the Press. It is not altogether surprising. Accounts varied, and when reported they usually appeared so incredible that cautious sub-editors were afraid of their papers being ridiculed. I was one of the few people who knew the truth, and even I never knew the whole truth. I have already told you that there was a woman in the case.

"Ronny Skinner drove that bus every day for just on four months. Every day there was almost identically the same crowd of men. They rushed up a few minutes before it started, with their newspapers and despatch-cases and pipes. They scrambled for the best seats, talked to each other or read their newspapers all the way down. They paid their shillings to the conductor, but no one took the slightest notice of the driver. I don't think any of them would have recognized him. The bus always started to the minute and arrived to the minute. There was never a hitch or an accident of any sort. And yet one day during the first week of July Skinner received a week's notice. No reason was given. The notice merely stated that his services would not be required after the following Friday. The truth was that one of the directors of the company had written to the manager to say that a job had got to be found for a chauffeur who was in his employ, and whom he wanted to get rid of. This story got round. When Ronny heard it, he grinned and said: 'Oh, well, I'll have to look out for something else. That's all!' He'd been through the war, you see. . . . Now, one thing which affects this story is a letter he received a few days later. It will be better if I don't tell you about this till later on. All that week Ronny grinned, and grinned, and grinned. There never was such a grin. And one night after the last trip he took Eyles out, and they went down town and did themselves well. The morning of his last day was a glorious summer's day, just like this, gentlemen. The bus was there outside Finchley Road Station twenty minutes before its time, with Skinner and Eyles already aboard. The stockbrokers and City merchants began to assemble. It was a very full load, and not only was it full inside and out, but there were five standing up.

"Five minutes to nine—clang went the bell! Grrrh! Grrrh! went the starter. She was off. The stockbrokers started their usual early morning badinage, papers rustled, cigar smoke curled upwards. Everything was delightfully as usual. The bus went along at its usual pace past Swiss Cottage. A little farther on it took a turning to the right down-hill.

"'How provoking!' said the manager of a chain of tea-shops. 'I suppose the road is up.' Several of the others looked equally provoked, but no one was unduly alarmed. At the end of a few minutes, however, a curious sense of misgiving crept over the company. The bus had taken another turning to the right and *was going back in the direction from which it had come!*

"Exclamations were flying around. 'What's the matter?' 'Why is he doing this?' 'Here, ring the bell.' Eyles was appealed to, but he only looked bewildered. He rang the bell. No notice was taken of it. Some of them tapped on the glass, but all they could see was Skinner's face, grinning furiously.

"In five minutes' time they were nearly a mile out of their course, and making for somewhere west of Golder's Green. The stockbrokers and City merchants began to get seriously alarmed. It was not only that the bus was out of its course, but it was being driven recklessly. It hardly slackened pace to go round corners. When impeded it dashed along on the wrong side of the road;

it lurched through the traffic regardless of consequences. At one corner a policeman held up his hand to stop it, but the bus swerved past him, and at the last second he succumbed to the popular slogan of 'Safety First' and leapt out of the way. After that the bus went off the beaten track. It raced along side-streets, and was already getting out into the country. Now, I want you to get firmly fixed in your mind's eye the picture of that company of gentlemen being whirled away from their lawful occasions. I could give you the details of several specific cases. There was, for instance, the chief cashier of a banking establishment in Lombard Street. He had the keys of the strong-room on him. It meant that the bank could do no business until he turned up. There was a barrister who had to defend a fraudulent company promoter at the Old Bailey at eleven o'clock. There was another man with six hundred and fifty pounds in cash in a bag. He had to pay off a ship's company down at Tilbury Docks at ten-thirty. The manager of the chain of tea-shops had to meet his directors at Cannon Street Hotel at ten, and render his annual report. There were innumerable board meeting appointments, business appointments, urgent affairs to be settled that morning, stocks to be disposed of, shares bought, certainties to be acted on, not even bookmakers to be overlooked, and here they all were rushing out into the country captive to the bow and spear (or shall we say wheel and lever ?) of a madman !

The stockbrokers and City merchants began to get seriously alarmed. It was not only that the bus was out of its course, but it was being driven recklessly.

"Englishmen as a rule have the reputation of taking this kind of adventure philosophically, but there was an element of outrage about this performance which infuriated them. Liberty of the subject indeed ! It was the sudden realization of their utter helplessness which led to a condition of pandemonium. All they could do was to ring the bell furiously all the time, bang on the window, and yell out : 'Stop ! Stop !' The men on top were no better off. They tried to get at the driver, but he is protected by a solid canopy. They could not even see him. They began to yell out to the passers-by, but the noise was so uproarious and confused, the passers-by merely thought it was some picnic or excursion party cheering,

and they cheered back in response and waved their hats. The mad thing got right away into the country. Eyles was being bullied and badgered, but he merely continued to look bewildered and to mutter, 'I don't know what's the matter with the chap. *I* can't stop him.' Some of the passengers crowded the back-board with the idea of leaping off if the bus slackened its pace at all, but it never went slow enough for that. There was nothing to do but bawl, and yell, and argue. Jagged nerves led to internal dissensions. One man wanted to smash the window and knock the driver over the head, and when it was pointed out to him that such an action would almost inevitably lead to a wreck of the bus, or in any case to a very bad accident, he wanted to fight his opponents, and was only prevented from carrying out his project by being held down on the floor.

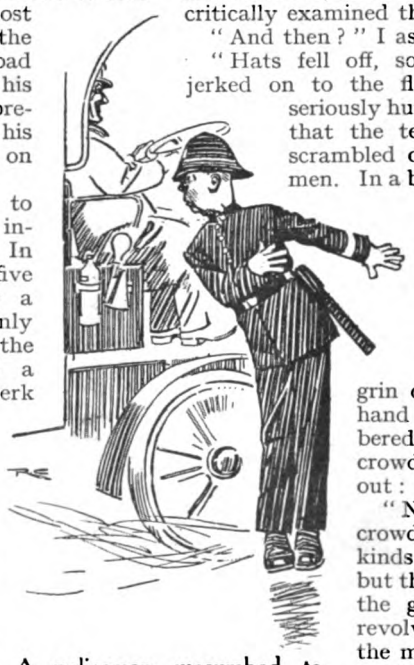
"The bus was scheduled to carry twenty-two passengers inside and twenty-four out. In addition to this were the five straphangers inside, making a total of fifty-one, of whom only three were women, one being the secretary to the editor of a financial paper, another a clerk in the Admiralty, and the third a lady with a summons to serve on a jury. The three women were neither better nor worse than the forty-eight men. The behaviour of the whole crowd of them can only be described as deplorable.

"I do not propose to weary you gentlemen with a detailed chronicle of the journey. Once well out into the country the grin of Skinner became broader, the venomous expression of the passengers more menacing. All their business and other appointments had gone by the wind. They were collectively buoyed up by the anticipation of some sort of feral vengeance. They gave up hope of any immediate release and simply waited for the mad journey to end, as end it must. They rushed along the country roads, up and down hills, across commons, through little villages, scattering all before them. They ran over three fowls, a cat, and two geese. In one village the left mudguard struck the wheel of a milk-cart and hurled seventeen gallons of good milk into the roadway. These were the only tragedies of note. In other respects it was a perfectly successful and triumphant ride, reflecting the utmost credit on the man at the wheel. Nothing happened, I say, until they reached—this common. Coming round the bend where you gentlemen came, the car began gradually to slow up. When it reached the entrance to this dingle it was travelling at rather less than six miles an hour. Suddenly it turned, swerved to the left, raced up the dingle, and ran nose on into the sand with a pretty considerable bump. And there it stuck, and there it remains to this day."

Parker and I uttered an exclamation of astonishment, and Mr. McGregor paused and critically examined the stem of his pipe.

"And then?" I asked, breathlessly.

"Hats fell off, some of the men were jerked on to the floor, but no one was seriously hurt. When they realized that the tension was over, they scrambled off that bus like madmen. In a body they rushed round and bore down on the chauffeur. Then an unpleasant surprise awaited them. Skinner had already dismounted. He was standing clear of the car, with an insolent grin on his face. In either hand he held a six-chambered revolver. As the crowd approached, he called out: 'Stand back!'



A policeman succumbed to the popular slogan of "Safety First" and leapt out of the way.

"Now, a panic-stricken crowd is liable to do all kinds of unreasonable things, but there is something about the glitter of a shiny little revolver that will steady the most rampageous. The stockbrokers and City merchants, armed with walking-sticks, newspapers, and despatch-cases, drew back and wavered. A white-whiskered City accountant with heavy gold chains hanging over his pendulous stomach bawled out: 'What the devil is the meaning of this outrage?' Skinner called out: 'Corporal Eyles, get all these men and women into line!' There was then another disconcerting discovery. Eyles appeared from the rear of the bus also carrying a six-chamber. He drew himself up and saluted Skinner. Skinner acknowledged the salute, and then, turning to the crowd, he said: 'There are fifty-one of you to two of us. With a little cohesion it would be possible for you to overcome us, but I assure you before that happened eighteen of you gentlemen would surely die. My friend, Corporal Eyles, who

Passers-by merely thought it was some excursion party cheering, and they cheered back in response.

was with me during the first battle of the Marne, will now get you into line. I will then address you from the top of the bus.' A more remarkable sight has surely never been seen on an English common. One of the women became hysterical and ran away, and she was allowed to go. The rest, under cover of Eyles's revolver, were drawn up in two lines of twenty-five. There they all stood, the oddest collection of sizes, and ages, and figures, in top-hats, and bowler hats, and Trilby hats, with newspapers tucked under their arms, holding bags and despatch-cases, and sticks and umbrellas. And the birds were singing overhead, just as they are to-day, gentlemen, and the bees were humming above the gorse. And there was Skinner, still in his driver's uniform, standing commandingly on the top of that ridiculous red bus. There was a clamour of angry protest from those fifty throats, not unmixed with jeering and even a little laughter. It became necessary for Skinner to flash one of the horrid little revolvers to obtain complete silence. When this desirable condition had been obtained, he spoke in a loud, ringing voice: 'Ladies and gentlemen, let me relieve your minds at once of what I know is the dominant fear that possesses you. Eyles and I have not brought you here to rob you. You shall return with all your property intact. Our exploit is rather a spiritual than a material one. We are doing it for your good. If we had not kidnapped you in this way you would now all be grinding and grubbing away in the City, making money, losing it; planning to make it, planning to lose it; contributing nothing of any real importance to the human commonweal. And now here you are on a lovely common with all the day before you, and the sun above your heads. You do not see enough of Nature, you do not learn to live, you do not see facts as they are. You never give yourselves a chance. Your idea of visiting Nature is to motor down to some such place as this, and then create for yourselves a miniature arena of all the petty, fidgeting conditions of your City lives. You stoop over a little white ball. Isn't that the expression you use: "Keep your eye on the ball"? I ask you, gentlemen, don't keep your eye on the ball, but keep your eye on the stars above you. Soften your hearts, and, when you travel, think of the people who drive you; when you labour and profit and play, think of the people who minister to your necessities. I have mentioned that there are fifty of you to two of us. Well, that represents roughly the percentage of the non-combatant and the combatant element in the Great War. Have you already forgotten that there was a great war, gentlemen? Have you already forgotten Eyles and me? or will you forget us to-morrow? Go, then, all of you, wander the fields and commons, and look into your hearts. Go, and be damned to you!' And without the slightest hesitation, he turned his revolver on to the crowd and fired point-blank into it!

They rushed through little villages, ran over fowls,——

"The panic that ensued is indescribable. The old man with the white whiskers leapt sideways, jumped, and fell into a gorse bush, shot through the heart. No, that is not true, but that was the immediate impression. As a matter of fact he did fall into a gorse bush, but that was only because he caught his foot in a rut. With a wild yell the whole company fled helter-skelter out of the dingle and across the common, followed by shot after shot from three revolvers. None of them was to know that the three revolvers were only loaded with blank cartridges. Was there ever such a sight? Top-hats fell off and were not reclaimed, bags and sticks and newspapers were scattered hither and thither. Someone with experience yelled out: 'Scatter! Open out!' They *did* scatter, they *did* open out. Younger men were racing like the wind. Fat old gentlemen were tumbling into sand-pits. The two women were screaming and holding on to the men. The common was dotted with black figures, ducking, doubling, and yelling. No one turned to look back at the assailants. No one saw the broad grin on Skinner's face."

Mr. McGregor again paused, and then he remarked casually:—

With a wild yell the whole company fled

"We shifted the position of the old bus a little since those days, and removed the wheels."

"We?" said Parker, faintly.

Mr. McGregor seemed hesitating how to shape the crisis of his story.

"I have mentioned the letter," he continued. "I cannot tell you the exact contents of the letter. You see, it was one of those sacred missiles—a love-letter, and not written to me. But this I know. It came from the girl—this girl of Skinner's. Her father had died suddenly, and forgotten to make a will. The daughter inherited his fortune. I think there was something in it about a special licence, something about Paris, something about the Italian Lakes. It may seem ironic that a man of Skinner's character should accept money left by a war profiteer. On the other hand, it seemed not altogether unfair that this money should go back to a man who went through it all. I think the girl must have pointed it out to him in the letter. He grinned so happily."

"But what happened when the stock-brokers scattered?" I asked.

"Everything was so easy after that. A parcel of clothes—two suits—was produced from beneath the front seat of the bus. The two men went behind some bushes in the dingle and changed. You see, the reason why Skinner had come to this particular common was because the girl lived at that little Georgian house just beyond the pine trees over there. You can't see it

helter-skelter, followed by shot after shot from three revolvers.

from here, but it is less than ten minutes' walk away. Thither they both went."

"But we are still mystified, Mr. McGregor," said Parker, noticing that our informant seemed inclined to leave off. "How is it that the bus is still here? Why are *you* living here? What action did the passengers take? and the company? Did Skinner get away?"

McGregor sighed pleasantly.

"Ronny Skinner is not the kind of man to go back on a pal. It may simplify things to you, gentlemen, if I tell you that my name is not McGregor—it is Eyles! Skinner did not have the slightest difficulty in getting away. No one recognized in the handsome young man who arrived at Cathay House any resemblance to the driver of the General. They had not even got his photograph, you see, to put in the *Daily Mail*. No one had noticed him very much. That is the advantage of being a nonentity. There was a half-hearted law case between the passengers and the company, but, as I have said, the majority were only too anxious to escape the ridicule which the case brought upon them. As for the bus itself, lawyers argued about it for nearly a year. It was so damaged that the company was not over-anxious to have it back. The local Commons Committee tried to make them. In the end it was found that Cathay House estate—that is to say, the girl—had certain rights over this particular dingle. The argument went on so long that the whole thing petered out. About a year later Skinner said to me: 'Eyles, old boy, here is a hundred pounds. You go and make that bus into a snug little summer retreat, and live there when you want a change. And Skinner allows me two hundred a year to live on, for helping him in the exploit. And here I am!"

"You seem a very educated man for a corporal and a bus conductor," I remarked.

"My experience was almost identical to that of Skinner," said Eyles. "When the war broke out I was just leaving Charterhouse. I joined up as a private. When it was over I was twenty-four, with no training, and my people had all been ruined. There are lots of others, too, in our position."

Parker stood up and shook himself.

"Well, Mr. Eyles," he said, "I'm sure we are much obliged to you. It's a most amazing story, and it's delightful to know that it has a happy ending."

"Yes," answered Eyles. "It has a happy ending. I hope I haven't bored you. You'll find the inn a quarter of a mile past the cross roads."

We thanked him profusely and departed. The kidnapped General! It was a most amazing story. As we tramped along the road we discussed and dissected the details of it.

"There's one thing that strikes me as queer," said Parker. "He said he was leaving Charterhouse when the war broke out. Say he was eighteen. When the war was over he would be approximately twenty-three, so now he should be about twenty-seven. He looks much older."

"Yes," I answered, "he does, but that may be partly due to the fact of his hair going grey. A lot of men went prematurely grey during the war. He looks very wiry and fit."

"Do you believe it's possible that there wasn't a lot of talk about it in the newspapers?"

"There may have been some. But you know what it is—one often reads some fantastic story of that sort, and one simply does not believe it. It's like freak dinners and explorers' yarns. One thinks 'Yes, yes,' and then you turn to see who won the semi-finals at Wimbledon. It may be true. And then there is a lot in what he says about ridicule. The majority of people would rather be robbed than made to look ridiculous."

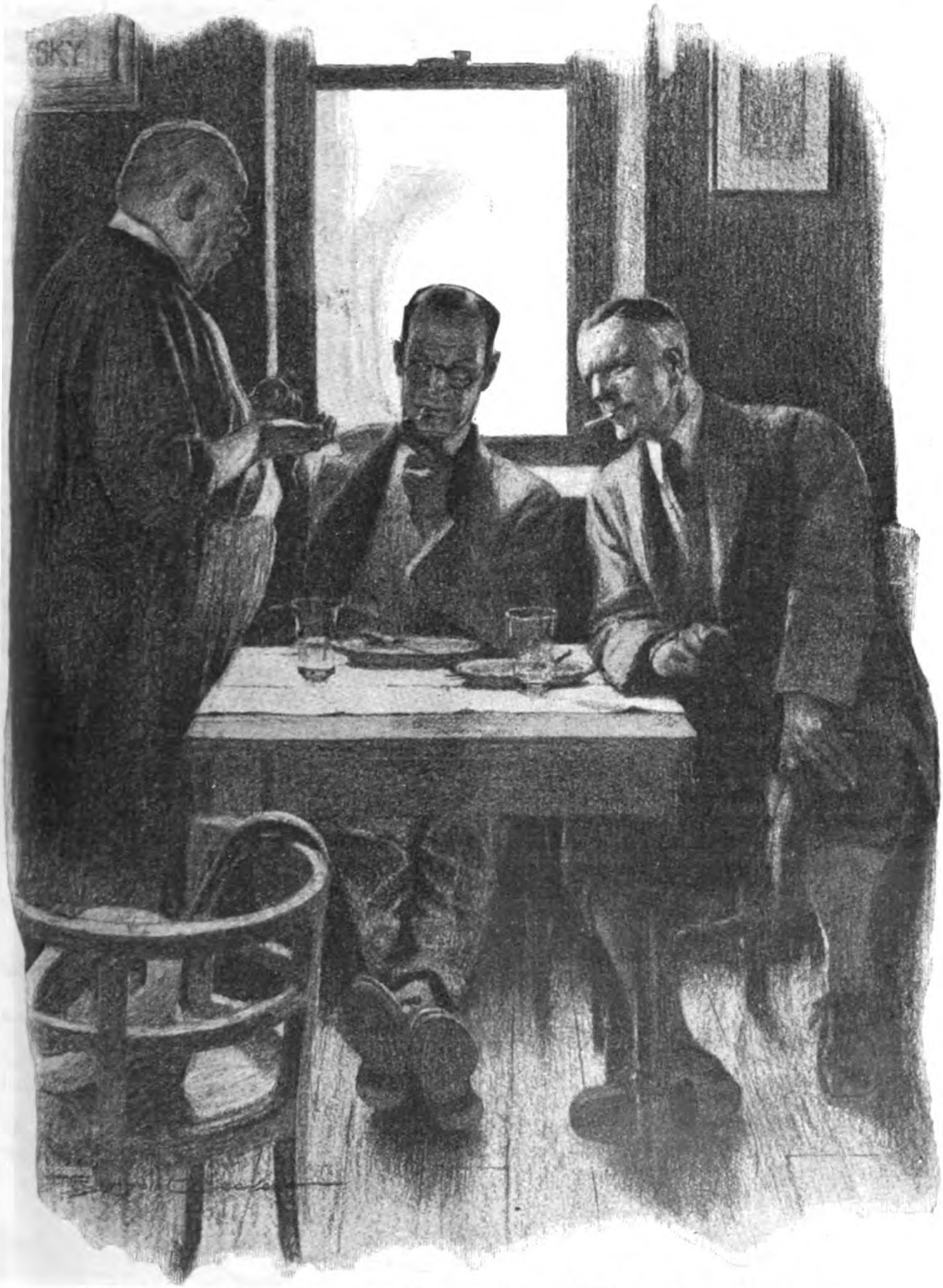
A LITTLE farther on we came to the inn. It was a pleasant lime-washed building set back from the road, and called "The Harvester." A few carters and field labourers were drinking beer in the public bar. We entered and called for bread and cheese and beer. The landlord, a fat, melancholy-looking man in corduroy trousers and a slate-grey flannel shirt, insisted on our having our repast in a little room called a "coffee-room." He seemed friendly but not inclined to be very discursive. This may have been due to the fact that his pulmonary organs were obviously in need of repair. He wheezed, and gasped, and panted as he toddled hither and thither in the prosecution of his good offices. It was late and we were hungry, and is there anything in such circumstances so completely satisfying as bread and cheese and good brown ale? We munched in happy silence, both, I believe, still ruminating on the bearded man's strange story.

When we had finished, we called the landlord to settle our reckoning.

Having done so, and come to complete agreement with him that it was a fine day, one of us—I think it was Parker—said:—

"That's a queer customer you have out there, living in the motor-bus on the common."

The landlord blinked his eyes, wheezed



"That's a queer customer you have out there, living in the motor-bus on the common."

through the contortions of his breathing apparatus :—

"Mr. Ormeroyd ? "

"No," one of us answered. "Mr. Eyles, the man in the shanty built on the remains of an old General motor-bus."

The landlord's face twisted into a form that was probably the nearest thing it ever

did in the way of a smile. When in control of his voice once more, he said :—

"Eyles? Oh, so that's what he calls himself to-day, is it?"

At this surprising remark we both looked at each other questioningly. Before we had had time to frame any query, however, the landlord added :—

"What story did he tell you about the bus to-day?"

As briefly as possible Parker recounted the story as told to us. When it was finished, we listened patiently to the landlord's lungs. At the end of a few minutes the bellows appeared to give out.

"Oh, so that's the story to-day, is it? A good one, too. He always tells a different story."

"What!" I exclaimed. "You mean to say the whole thing is made up?"

"I wouldn't go so far as that," said the landlord. "There is a story right enough, but it has never been told. I've heard tell that if the true story was ever told——"

He stopped and blinked at a small canary in a diminutive cage in front of the window.

We waited for the landlord's version, but it seemed never to be coming.

"Did you say that his real name is Ormeroyd?" I asked at length.

"So I've heard tell," answered our host. "They say he is a very clever fellow. He's a very nice fellow, anyway. I've nothing against him. They say he used to be a writer before the war. You know, story-book stuff, tales and so on—made quite a big name, I believe, and lots of money. Now all the stories he invents concern the old bus."

"But—why? What is the cause?"

"I believe there is a story that, if told, would leave the story you heard to-day not worth mentioning. D'you remember during the first weeks of the war they sent a whole lot of London motor-buses out to help transport the troops? Well, Mr. Ormeroyd was a skilful shuvver, and he volunteered, and got the billet to drive one of these buses. I don't rightly know the details. He was only out there six weeks. There was some awful incident—I believe he was the only one of a company saved—he on his old battered bus. There was a score of them buses, men and drivers, and all blown to pieces. It was somewhere in Belgium. He got away back to the lines. But—well, it's a kind of—what do you call it?—you know, got on his nerves, never thinks of anything else. He can still invent his stories, but they always concern the old bus. When they discharged him, I believe he went to one of these here dumps and bought an old battered bus. He says it was his. It may be, for all we know. People up on the common there gave him permission to build his shanty. He lives there, thinkin' and writin'. A clever fellow, they all say."

"But—hasn't he any friends? Can't they make it better for him?"

"Oh, yes, he's got plenty of friends. The people at the house, for instance—you know Cathay House—they look after him. There's a girl there. They say it is better for him to live as he does—a kind of rest-cure. He's getting better. They say he'll get all right in time. He's got money and his health is otherwise middlin' good. He's a clever fellow. He'll get it all back, they say. His stories get better, you know. I've noticed it. That one about the stock-brokers! Oh, dear! He, he, he!"

Our good landlord was emitting a definite laugh. Moist tears clung to his large, luminous eyes.

"There is a girl, you say?" Parker almost whispered.

"A very nice girl, too, the daughter of Colonel Redding, who owns Cathay House. Why, yes. Oh, I do like that about the stockbrokers!"

The landlord was still chuckling as we took our departure.

WHEN we were once more upon the road, I remarked :—

"So this story, also, may have a happy ending, Jim."

"I hope so," answered Parker. "I liked that fellow. I liked the rude things he said about golf."

And borrowing a match from me, he lighted his pipe; and we continued our pilgrimage.

TETHERSTONES

by

ETHEL M. DELL

CHAPTER V.

THE EXILE.

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

PART III.

LATE in the afternoon Frances stooped to kiss little Ruth and turned to go. "I shall be ready at any time you need me,' she said.

The old house was full of shadows. She could hear the shrill cries of swallows wheeling about the eaves. The scent of honeysuckle was everywhere. How had she ever thought of it as a prison?

Standing at the foot of the stairs, down the passage to her left that led to the study she heard a voice—an old man's voice, broken, pathetic, piteously pleading.

"I assure you," it said, "I assure you—you are wrong. It is difficult to conceive how you can permit yourself to harbour these monstrous and terrible ideas. I sometimes think your brain is not normal. You are causing the greatest grief both to your mother, whom you profess to love, and to myself, for whom I know but too well that all filial affection has long ceased to exist. I am an old man and helpless. Your behaviour is breaking my heart. I shall go down to my grave with the knowledge that my son—my only son—will rejoice to see me laid there."

There followed an agonized sound that pierced Frances like the cry of a child. Almost before she knew what she was doing, she went down the passage swiftly to the door that stood half-open and knocked upon it quickly and nervously.

Only as she entered did she realize that her heart was thumping almost unendurably.

She paused just within the room. "Can I come in?" she said, and felt her breath come sharply with the words.

A startled silence followed her appearance, and then very kindly and courteously the old man greeted her.

"Come in, Miss Thorold! Come in! I am delighted to see you!"

He was sitting in a leathern arm-chair in the failing light, and she was struck afresh by his frailty and the deathly whiteness of his face.

She went forward, keenly aware of Arthur standing motionless before the fireplace, but not glancing at him as she passed. She reached Mr. Dermot, and took the hand he extended.

"I am so sorry you have been ill," she said.

"Yes, we are a sad household—a sad household," he made answer. "I am told the little one is very ill—the little blind girl who lives with us. Can you tell me what is the matter with her? Some childish ailment, I suppose?"

As it were against her will, Frances glanced at Arthur. His eyes looked straight back at her from under frowning brows. He spoke briefly, coldly.

"I think you have been informed before, sir, that the child would not live to grow up. Perhaps under the circumstances it is hardly to be desired that she should."

"Under what circumstances?" said Mr. Dermot, and his voice was as cold as his son's, but with an edge of satire that was to Frances even more unbearable than the studied indifference of the younger man's utterance. "Since when, may I ask, have you been a qualified judge as to the relative values of life and death?"

Arthur made a very slight movement that

Copyright, 1923, by Ethel M. Dell.

might have denoted either protest or exasperation. "I referred to her infirmity," he said.

Mr. Dermot laughed, a soft, bitter laugh, and Frances shivered. She felt the tension between the two men to be so acute as to be near the snapping point, and wondered desperately what mistaken impulse had brought her thither and how she might escape. But in a moment the old man addressed her again, and there came to her a curious conviction that in some fashion she was needed.

"Will you not sit down, Miss Thorold," he said, "and take tea with me? I do not have my meals with my family as, on account of the weakness of my heart, quiet is essential to me. You were just going"; he turned very pointedly to his son; "will you be good enough to ask Elsie to bring tea for Miss Thorold as well as for myself?"

"Very good, sir." Arthur made a sudden movement as one who has come to a decision. "I will send in tea," he said, and was gone.

They heard him tramp heavily down the passage, and it seemed to Frances that a shudder went through the frail old man lying back in the arm-chair. He made a weary movement with one hand as one who would dismiss a distasteful subject.

"Tell me a little more about your book!" she said gently.

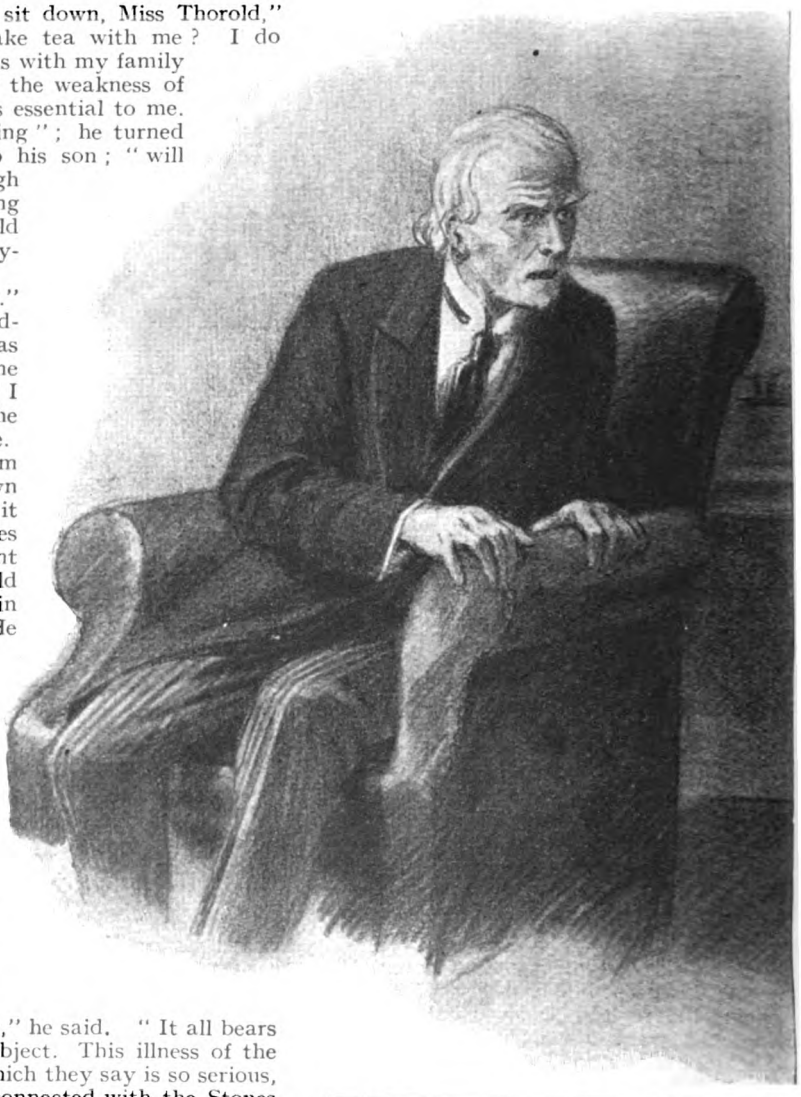
He looked at her, and she saw his eyes kindle in the dimness.

"I am going to ask you to tell me something first," he said. "It all bears upon the same subject. This illness of the little blind girl which they say is so serious, is it in any way connected with the Stones—with any so-called accident that occurred there?"

He leaned slowly forward with the words, and though they were deliberately uttered there was an eagerness vibrating in them that made her wonder.

"Has no one told you about it?" she said.

'No one—no one. I am treated as a nonentity always." He spoke fretfully, querulously. "I believe it is on account of my health, but I often think my health would improve if I were allowed to lead a more normal life. My son has relegated to



"I am very anxious to know all," he said. "They try to keep it from me, but it is wrong—it is wrong."

himself the rulership of this establishment, and everyone is made to bow down to him. I am told—nothing. I am consulted—never."

Frances looked at him. His voice was tremulous, and yet she had a curious conviction that it was not solely anxiety for little Ruth that made it so. She considered for a moment before replying.

"She had a fall," she said then.

"Ah! Was it near the Rocking Stone?" Mr. Dermot sat slowly forward. "You will tell me," he said. "I am sure you will tell me."

"I only know what I have been told since," she said. "They found her lying unconscious, and it was evident that she had had a fall."

"And that is all you know? You cannot tell me who found her or why she went?" Suppressed excitement

sounded in the words. Mr. Dermot was gripping the arm of his chair, and the bones of his knuckles stood out sharply. "I am very anxious to know all," he said. "They try to keep it from me, but it is wrong—it is wrong. She had a fall, you say? Was she—was she—alone when she fell?"

"I believe so," Frances said. "In fact, I am sure of it, for they say she was not found for some hours after."

"Ah!" The old man relaxed so suddenly that he almost fell back into his chair. "That is what I wanted to know. She was alone. They say so." He broke off, panting a little.

"I think it was perfectly easy for the poor mite to fall, considering her blindness," said Frances.

"Ah, no doubt," he said, "no doubt!" Then, after a moment: "You think it strange that there should be so great a lack of sympathy between certain members of my family and myself. But I assure you it did not originate with me. I am a student, Miss Thorold, and perhaps it is not surprising that those who devote the whole of themselves to manual labour on a farm should find it difficult to keep in touch with me. It is said that if you associate with the animals you will in time assimilate their characteristics. This has already happened to Arthur, and some of the girls are following in his footsteps. Milly is the only one who has shown no outward signs of deterioration since we came to Tetherstones. It is a very insidious evil, and it spreads—it spreads." He sighed. "I foresaw it before we came here. I was never in favour of the scheme, but—I was overruled. We have a tyrant among us whose will is law."

"Then you don't like Tetherstones?" Frances said.

She saw again an extraordinary gleam in his eyes as he made reply. "You might ask a convict how he likes Princetown," he said. "My place is at Oxford, but I have been torn from it and made to endure life in the desert all these years."

"But a very beautiful desert," suggested Frances.

He made a wide gesture of repudiation. "What is that to an exile? When you have been made to eat stones for bread, you will not notice if they are beautiful to look at."

"I can understand that," she said. "Yet a sense of beauty is sometimes a help. At least, I found it so when I was at Burminster."

"Ah! Burminster!" He repeated the name thoughtfully. "Did you ever meet anyone there of the name of Rotherby?"

"Why, yes." She started a little, remembering Arthur's attitude. "I was with Dr. Rotherby, who is the Bishop of Burminster."

"Yes—yes." He nodded gravely. "We were at Oxford together. He left and I remained. So he is at Burminster! A hard man—a hard man! And did you ever meet his nephew—Montague?"

She felt the colour leap to her face. "Yes, I have met him," she said.

"Ah! He is a friend of yours," said the old man, with quiet conviction. "A close friend?"

She did not know how to answer him. No words would come. But in that moment to her intense relief she heard a step outside. The door opened, and Mrs. Dermot entered.

"Arnold," she said, "I am sorry to disturb you, but Dr. Square is here. He will be down immediately to see you. May he come in?"

The old man turned towards her with a fond smile. "My dear," he said, "any pretext is welcome that brings you to my side."

Frances got up, thankful for the interruption. "I will go to the kitchen if I may," she said. "Maggie is there."

"We need not drive you away," protested Mr. Dermot.

But she was already at the door. "Perhaps—later," she said, and was gone before he could say any more. The closing of the door behind her gave her a sense of escape from something terrible which she told herself was utterly unreasonable.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHAIN.

THE kitchen-door was half-open. She pushed it open and entered. Then sharply she drew back. It was raining and the place was in semi-darkness. Only a red glow from the great open fireplace lighted it, throwing into strong relief the old black rafters. And in this glow, seated at the table facing her, but with his head upon his hands, was a man.

He did not stir at her entrance. It was evident he did not hear her, and for a moment her impulse was to go as suddenly and silently as she had come. But something in that bowed silvered head checked her. She stood still, and in a second a whine of greeting from under the table betrayed her. Arthur sat upright with a jerk, and Roger came smiling out from his place at his master's feet to welcome her.

Arthur spoke, his voice low and constrained. "Come and sit down! I'm just going."

The awful pallor of his face, the misery

of the eyes that avoided hers, went straight to her heart. She moved forward, urged by the instinct to help, forgetful of everything else in the rush of pity that surged through her.

"I haven't come back to make trouble," she said, "only to try and help—if I can."

"Yes. I understand," he said, and his voice came half-strangled, as though he fought some obstruction in his throat.

He got up to go; then very suddenly his voice came to her again, hollow, strained, oddly vibrant. "I should like you to know one thing. Though you have come back here against my will, you have—nothing to fear. I recognize it was—an act of—charity—and, so far as I am concerned, you are safe. I will never get in your way."

"Thank you," Frances said quietly. "I am not afraid of that."

He made a jerky movement, but instantly checked himself, and maintained his silence. She wondered what was passing behind that tensely-restrained front, what torment was at work within him to produce the anguish of suffering which she sensed rather than saw. But he gave her no clue of any sort.

She looked up at him, gravely resolute. "Mr. Dermot, please sit down!"

He gave in abruptly, in a fashion that surprised her. He dropped down on to the wooden chair he had occupied at her entrance, and propped his head on his hands.

"My God!" he said, under his breath. "My God!"

Then she knew that his endurance was very near the breaking-point, and the woman's soul in her rose up in strength to support his weakness.

She bent over him, all thought of fear gone from her.

He moved then, reached out suddenly, and grasped her wrist, drawing her hand over his face till her palm was tightly pressed upon his eyes.

"My God!" he said again, almost inarticulately. "Oh, my God—my God!"

A dreadful sob broke from him, and he caught his breath and held it rigidly till the veins in his temples stood out like cords.

Frances looked on mutely till she could bear it no longer. Then very gently she laid her other hand upon his shoulder.

"Ah, don't!" she said. "Don't! Let it come! It will be easier to bear afterwards. And what do I matter?"

She felt a great shiver go through him. His hold upon her hand was as the clutch of a drowning man, and suddenly she felt his tears, slow and scalding, oozing between her fingers. He bent his head lower and lower, striving with himself, and she instinctively turned her eyes away, averting them from his agony.

So, for what seemed an interminable space of time, they remained. Then at last the man spoke, jerkily, with difficulty, yet with returning self-mastery.

"It's no good crying out. It's got to be endured to the end." He paused; then: "I don't often cry out," he said, and she thought she caught a note that was almost of appeal in his voice.

"We are all human," she said.

"Are we?" He raised himself abruptly with the words and leaned back in his chair, looking straight up at her, her hand still grasped in his. "Are you human?" he said, as if challenging her. "I don't believe you are."

His eyes were burning. They had the strained look that comes from lack of sleep. A brief misgiving assailed her, but she put it firmly away. She met his look unflinching.

"Yes, I am human," she said.

"Then how you must hate me!" he said.

"No," she said. "I don't hate you."

"Why not?" he said.

She hesitated momentarily. Then: "It may be because I don't know you well enough," she said.

She saw his throat move spasmodically. His eyes left hers. "I would rather be hated—than tolerated—by you," he said, almost under his breath.

His hold upon her had slackened; she slipped her hand away. "Won't you have your tea?" she said. "I am sure you will feel the better for it."

He made an odd sound that might have been an effort at laughter, and stretched out his hand for the cup.

She stood beside him while he drank, and took it from him when he had finished. "Eat some toast while I pour you out some more," she said.

They ate and drank together thereafter in unbroken silence until he rose to go. Then he paused, looking across at her.

"So you have decided to reserve judgment for the present?" he said.

She met his look steadily, though her heart quickened a little.

"For the present—yes," she said.

He still looked at her. "And if you find—some day—that I can behave other than as a brute-beast, will you perhaps—manage to forget?"

To forget! The word, uttered so humbly, brought the quick tears to her eyes. She turned her face aside.

"Why don't you ask me to—forgive?" she said, her voice very low.

"Because I won't ask the impossible," he answered. "Because you tell me you are human, and—well, some things are past forgiveness. I know that."

He swung round with the words. She heard him open the door, heard again the drip and patter of the rain outside, heard the heavy tread of his feet as he went out.

Then, when she knew that she was alone, her strength went from her. She covered her face and wept.

In that hour she knew that she was chained indeed, beyond all hope of escape. Brute-beast as he described himself—murderer at heart as she believed him to be—yet had he implanted that within her heart which she could never cast out. Whatever he was, whatever he did, could make no difference now. She loved him.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MESSAGE.

"THE doctor says it can't possibly go on much longer."

"But if it does—if it does——"

"Oh, Lucy, do stop crying! What's the good? You'll make yourself ill, child, if you go on."

"I can't help it—I can't help it. Mother looked like death just now."

The very thought of tears seemed out of place in that quiet room, for Ruth was as still and as peaceful as an effigy upon a tomb. She was not asleep; of that Frances was fully convinced. But she was utterly at rest, content so long as her friend remained beside her to lie in that trance-like repose and wait.

A long time passed thus; then there came a movement in the adjoining room. The white-haired mother entered, and Ruth spoke.

"My dear Granny!" she said, softly.

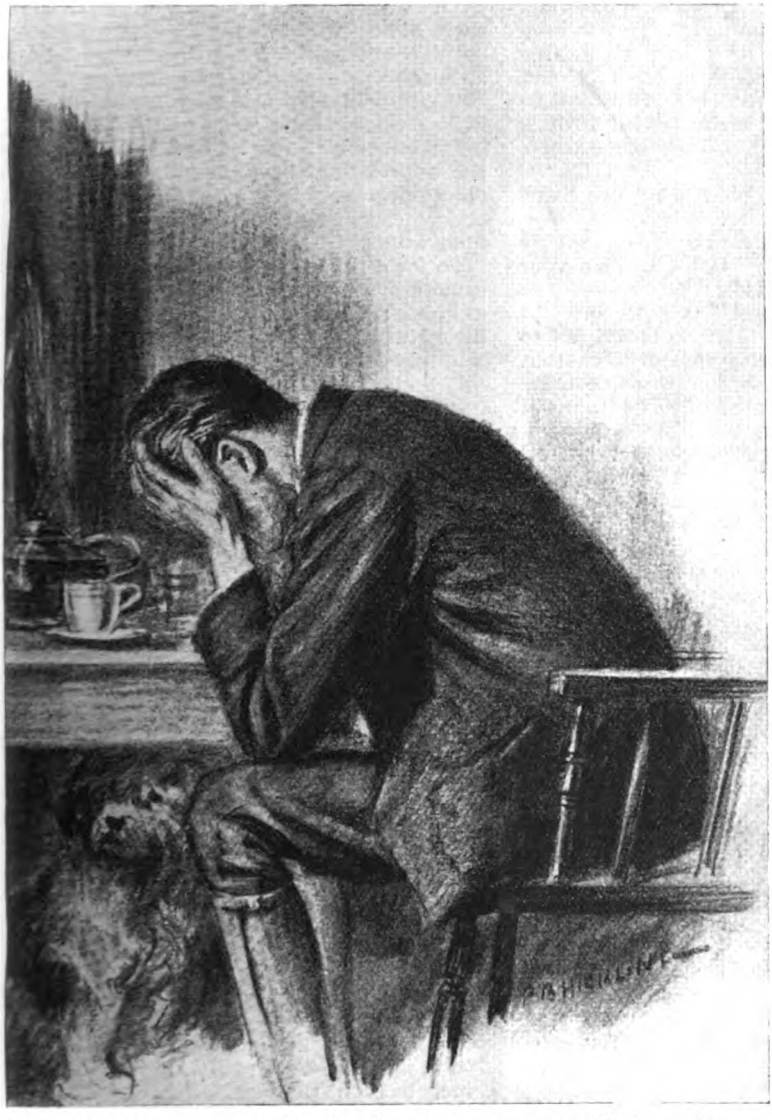
Mrs. Dermot motioned to Frances not to move. She came to the other side of the bed and knelt down. "Shall we say our prayers, darling?" she said.

Abruptly Frances realized that someone else had entered also, though she had heard no sound, and looking up she saw Arthur

He did not stir at her entrance. It was evident he did not hear silently as she had come. But something

standing just within the doorway between the two rooms.

He stood there motionless until his mother began to murmur the Lord's Prayer, then noiselessly he crept forward and knelt close to the foot of the bed.



her, and for a moment her impulse was to go as suddenly and in that bowed head checked her.

The voice ceased, and there fell a deep silence. How long it lasted Frances never knew. She was as one kneeling in a holy place, too near to the spiritual to reck of time. But gradually, as she knelt, there dawned upon her the consciousness of another presence in that chamber of death. It did not surprise her when Ruth's voice, quiet and confident, spoke in the stillness. "This is my mother," she said. "She came to me that night at the Stones and stayed with me so as I shouldn't be frightened. She said she would come again if God would let her." An odd little quiver of rapture ran through the words. "Can you see her, Granny?" she said.

"I know that she is here," said Mrs. Dermot.

"She is very, very pretty," said Ruth, in a hushed voice, "much prettier than anyone else I know. Her hair is dark, and her eyes are lovely, like harebells. No one else has eyes like that." Again the thrill of gladness was in her voice. "I can see her, Granny! I can see her!" said little Ruth. Then in a lower voice, slightly mystified: "I wonder why Uncle Arthur and Miss Thorold are so unhappy? I can see them too, but they are not so clear. I wish they were happy. I should see them more easily then."

Frances raised her head, but the blue eyes were fixed upwards; it was the eyes of the soul that saw her, the voice of the soul that spoke.

"Miss Thorold," said the child, "the Stones are waiting for you. Don't ever be afraid! They are going to give you something that you're wanting—something that you've wanted always. I don't know what it is, but that doesn't matter. You'll know

it when you find it, because it's very big —bigger even than the Rocking Stone. And if you can't find it by yourself, Uncle Arthur will help you. Only you'll have to ask him—because it's the only way." Her voice began to drag a little. "He's so lonely and so sad, and he never thinks anybody wants him. Often when you think he is cross, he is just unhappy. He has been unhappy for ever so long, and it's getting worse. Grandpa doesn't understand, but then he is so often away now. He has been away ever since that night I went to look for you at the Stones. I don't know where he goes to, do you ?"

Frances hesitated, but at once Mrs. Dermot spoke in answer.

"Granny knows where he is, darling. He is coming back soon. Don't trouble your little head about him!"

"Give him my love!" said Ruth. "I sha'n't see him again, but he is too old to mind, and I am not big enough to matter. Will you ask Uncle Arthur to come quite close to me just for a minute ? I want—I want to tell him something."

Arthur rose from his knees and moved to the head of the bed. His arm went round his mother as he stooped to the child.

"I am here, Ruth. What is it ?"

There came a little gasp from the bed. "Will you—hold my hand ?" said Ruth. "I—can't see you quite well yet. Thank you, Uncle Arthur. Now I can tell you. Do you remember that night I found my dear Miss Thorold—up by the Stones—when she was frightened—and lost ?"

"I remember," he said.

"I found her—for you," said the child. "God sent me and I went. I brought her back to Tetherstones—for you. I told her it was home because you were here—because I knew — somehow — that you wanted her."

The tired voice trailed off drowsily. Frances was anxiously watching the little white face on the pillow, but suddenly something drew her look upwards. She met the man's eyes across the bed, and was conscious of a sense of shock. They were grim with a desperate endurance that pierced her like a cry. Though they met her own, they were fixed and desolate. Scarcely even did they seem to see her.

It seemed to her a long while before Ruth spoke again, and then it was to utter her own name.

"Dear Miss Thorold, are you there ?"

She rose up quickly. "Yes, darling, yes. What is it ?"

The blue eyes with their mysterious fire gazed straight up to hers. "You'll find it up by the Stones," said the child, "where the giant harebells grow. That is the message, dear Miss Thorold. And when you find it, keep it—always—always—always!" She broke off, and for a few seconds it was as if she had forgotten to breathe, so still was she, so utterly without any suggestion of pain. Then, very faintly, her voice came again.

"I'm very tired. Is my dear Granny there ?"

"I am here, darling," came the patient answer from the bedside.

"Will you kiss me good night ?" said little Ruth. "I am going to sleep now."

On either side of the bed the man and the woman drew back, making way for the older woman. She bent and kissed the child, clasping her closely, murmuring fond words.

So for a time they remained. Then there came a soft, fluttering sigh, and afterwards a great silence. And Frances knew that little Ruth was asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MIRACLE.

"YOU won't leave us ?" said Maggie, tremulously. "Please, you won't leave us ?"

"If I can be of the slightest use here, of course I will stay," Frances answered, "for a time at least. But I can't live on your kindness any longer. That is absolutely certain. I am beginning to make money by my sketches, and I must be allowed to pay my way."

"You will talk that over with Mother, won't you ?" said Maggie. "I know she doesn't want you to go. None of us do.'

"I wonder if I could help with your father," said Frances.

"Oh, don't think of it!" said Maggie "It wouldn't be fit for you."

But Frances did think of it notwithstanding. The serious illness of the old man, quickly following the death of little Ruth, had stirred her deepest pity for them all, and she longed to be of use. They had done so much for her in her hour of need, and it seemed to her a Heaven-sent opportunity to make some return.

She saw but little of Arthur during that time, but on the day of her talk with Maggie she came upon him unexpectedly towards evening, leaning moodily upon the garden-gate in the gloaming.

She paused with the half-formed intention of making some casual remark; but words that were wholly different from those she had intended to utter came to her lips instead.

"I am wondering," she said, "if perhaps I could be of use—relieve you and your

mother a little ? I should be very proud if you would allow me to help."

His attitude altered on the instant, so suddenly that she was disconcerted. He leaned towards her with an odd gesture of surrender. "It is not a question of my allowing or disallowing," he said. "You have me in the dust. Do whatever seems good to you—now and always! You come or go at Tetherstones exactly as you will."

The words were few, but the sudden fire of his look reached her soul. As she went away down the garden path, she knew that her limbs were trembling. But there was that in her heart which filled her with a burning exultation. The stones were turning to bread indeed.

CHAPTER IX.

THE INVALID.

"DON'T take any notice of anything he says!" whispered Nurse Dolly. "Just sit beside him and keep him quiet! He's got some queer fancies, poor old man. Sure you won't mind them?"

"Of course not," Frances murmured back.

"That's right. And give him some bromide if he gets tiresome! Otherwise, that digitalis stuff."

She nodded a cheery farewell and departed, softly closing the door behind her, leaving Frances to wonder at her endurance. For it did not take more than the most casual glance to tell her that the girl's eyes were drooping with weariness.

It was the afternoon of the following day and she had gained her end after a very brief talk with Mrs. Dermot, who, somewhat to her surprise, had put but slight obstacle in her way.

So for that afternoon the invalid was in her charge, and Frances was strangely elated by the trust reposed in her. The grimness of Tetherstones seemed to be mellowing day by day into a homely warmth that was infinitely precious to her.

She had another reason also for elation on that golden afternoon of late summer. A letter had been forwarded to her from Fordestown bearing a London postmark, containing a further cheque for ten pounds from Montague Rotherby, and a few words scrawled within telling her that her sketches were sold and that the purchaser desired to see her in town with a view to commissioning more.

It was an offer which she well knew she could not afford to refuse, though she would have given much to have received it from any other quarter. But since the means could not be of her choosing, since, moreover, it was inevitable that she should meet and finally convince Montague Rotherby that the concession he had so hardly won from her must be relinquished, she braced herself to face the situation with a stout heart. She would go and meet him.

The afternoon sunlight slanted in at the open window. From where she sat she could see the steep rise of the moor that led up to the Stones. She pictured them in their stark grandeur—those mystic signs of a bygone age—the tetherstones of the prisoners and the terrible Rocking Stone that none might move out of its place, but that even a child might sway. Her thoughts dwelt tenderly upon little Ruth and her harebells—the flowers to which she had likened her mother's eyes!

A feeble voice spoke in the stillness and her mind flashed back to her surroundings.

"Nan, my dear, is that you?" it said.

She heard the words and sat motionless, uncertain as to whether they were intended for her or not. Then she saw that the tired old eyes were looking straight at her, and she softly rose and went to the bed.

"Is there anything I can do for you?" she asked.

He looked up at her, frowning a little, as if there were something about her that he could not wholly understand. "Yes, dear, yes," he said, finally. "Bring your little sketching-block and sit down beside me! I should like to lie and watch you."

"Very well," she said, "if you really wish it. But——" She stood hesitating, uncertain whether to comply with his request; for the sketch upon which she was just then engaged was one of little Ruth in the cornfield. She was making it while the memory was still fresh within her, and she planned to give it to Mrs. Dermot.

The old man broke in upon her irresolution. "Go and fetch it! Go and fetch it! You know how I love to see you at work. They have kept you away from me for a very long time, my darling. Run and fetch it and come straight back!"

She decided swiftly that, whatever his delusion, it was better to humour him. She went quickly from the room, and ran down the passage to her own. Here she hastily collected her sketching materials, and was back again within two minutes of her departure.

She found him anxiously watching the door, and she saw his eyes kindle afresh at the sight of her. "How like you, my dear!" he said. "There is no one else in the family who would have left me alone for a single second. They are always watching me, always watching me. I don't know why."

She returned to her seat by his side.

"I expect they think you might want something and there would be no one to give it to you," she said. "Do you really want to see my latest sketch? You are sure it interests you?"

"Yes—yes." A touch of impatience sounded in the answer, but the next moment the thin old hand came out and patted hers. "My little daughter!" he said very fondly. "I can't spare you to that brother of mine again. He keeps you too long—too long."

"I am very glad to be back," said Frances, gently.

His clasp relaxed after a moment. "Well, dear, let me see what you have been doing!" he said wearily. "I must not talk very much to-day. My heart is very tired. Have you more than one to show me?"

"No, only one," she said. "There hasn't been a great deal of time just lately."

"Ah!" He smiled. "The pomps and vanities! Is that it? You have been very gay, I hear? And that handsome youngster—your cousin—what has he to say for himself? You will never countenance any serious attention from him, my darling, promise me! He is in love with you, of course. They all are. You are so lovely—so lovely. But cousins, you know, cousins are only brothers and sisters once removed. Uncle Theodore would never permit it for a moment. Neither would I, dear. You know that. You are so beautiful. You will look higher than a near relation with a wild record like his. Pshaw! I am talking nonsense. You would never dream of marrying him."

"Never!" said Frances very decidedly, as he paused for her assurance.

"Thank you, dear, thank you," he said. "Now let me see your sketch!"

She held it up in front of him, propped as he was upon the pillows, and there fell a long silence while he scrutinized it. The picture was of Ruth standing among the sheaves in the sunlight.

The old man looked at it intently with drawn brows. Finally, with a deliberation that was almost painful, he looked at her.

"Who is that child?" he said.

She hesitated for a second; then: "Don't you remember little—Ruth?" she said, gently.

His frown deepened. "Little Ruth! You mean the blind child, I think—the little girl who lives with us?"

"Yes," said Frances.

"And this is that child?" He turned again to the sketch, gazing at it fixedly. "But why have you made her like Nan?" he said, in a troubled voice. "Nan wasn't blind. She had eyes like bluebells." His look came back to her. "Thank you, Miss Thorold," he said courteously. "You have a very charming talent. Some day I hope you will allow me to conduct you to the Stones. I should much like to see a sketch of them from your brush, most especially of the Rocking Stone, regarding which there are some very interesting traditions." His tone was suddenly restless.

"Shall we talk of something else?" said Frances quietly.

He lifted his brows. "Certainly," he said, with a touch of hauteur. "I have no desire to discuss anything distasteful to you. In fact, our worthy doctor has warned me that conversation of any description should not be indulged in too freely. So pray take up your sketch and work, and I will lie and watch you."

THE consciousness of the old man closely watching her did not tend to help her, but after a few minutes the fascination of her art asserted itself, and she began to forget him.

Her thoughts wandered back over the random words that old Mr. Dermot had just uttered. The name of Theodore had stirred her memory. It was the name of the Bishop of Burminster. She remembered how once in conversation with Arthur she had spoken of him and discovered that he knew him. Was it possible that they were related? She felt as if a scroll, hitherto sealed, were being unrolled before her eyes; and so strong was the impression that her fingers ceased from their task and she looked up.

In a moment she was aware of a startling change in the old man in her charge. He had sunk down on the pillows, and his face was ghastly.

She got up quickly, seizing a bottle of restorative as she did so. Then she saw that his lips were moving, and was partially reassured.

"I am so sorry," she said, with deep self-reproach. "I ought to have seen."

"No—no," he said, in his kindly, courteous fashion. "You must not blame yourself for that. I think I will have a little sleep. I shall not last much longer, but I shall live to see the Stones again—just once again—my Stones—the place of sacrifice—where my three-fold vow has been accomplished." His voice began to trail off indistinctly. He closed his eyes. "The place of sacrifice," he murmured again, and then followed an odd jumble of words in which "mother, father, and child" came with unintelligible frequency until his utterance ceased altogether.

Frances stood by his side, listening to his uncertain breathing while other words

sprang up all-unbidden in her mind, almost finding their way to her lips.

"From all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil—Good Lord deliver us!"

CHAPTER X.

THE WOMAN'S RIGHT.

"HE is still sleeping very peacefully," said Mrs. Dermot, with a grateful look at Frances. "You had a very composing effect upon him this afternoon. I hope it did not tire you very badly."

It was supper-time, and they had met at the table in the old farm kitchen. It was the one meal of the day at which the whole family as a rule assembled, but Dolly and Milly were absent on this occasion in the sick-room, and Arthur and Maggie had not entered.

"It did not tire me at all," Frances answered. "I was very, very glad to be of any use. I hope you will let me do it again."

"You are very good," said Mrs. Dermot, with a tired smile. "Oh, there you are, Arthur! I was just wondering. And Maggie—where is she?"

He had entered from the scullery. He stopped beside her chair. "Maggie? I don't know where Maggie is. Somewhere about, no doubt. How are you, Mother? Better?"

She looked up into his face, and Frances saw the flash of sympathy between them, realized for an instant the closeness of the bond at which till then she had only guessed, and felt as if she had looked upon something sacred.

"I am all right, dear," said Mrs. Dermot. "I have had a most refreshing sleep, thanks to Miss Thorold's kindness. Your father will be much better when he wakes."

"Sit down, Arthur!" said Nell. "We want to begin."

He glanced round with a quick frown. "Where is everybody? Maggie—Oliver! Why don't they come in? Go and call them, Elsie!"

"I don't know where they are," said Elsie. "I've milked the cows and fed the horses and locked up. They went to market this morning, and I haven't seen them since."

He turned again to Elsie. "You say you locked up. Was the brown cob back?"

"I didn't go that way," she said, with a touch of defiance. "It was only the cart-horses I saw to. Joe was there too. Oliver always does the cob."

"What does it matter?" Nell said. "Maggie can have her supper when she comes in. There's no reason to wait for her."

"It does matter," he returned sternly. "I won't have any of you out on the moors after dark, and you know it."

"My good man!" said Nell. "What do you think we're made of?"

He whirled upon her in a sudden tempest of wrath. "Don't you dare to gainsay me! I mean it. I—will—not—have—you—out—after—dark. Is that plain enough? Damn it! Do you think I'll be defied to my face?"

"My dear!" said Mrs. Dermot very gently.

He looked down at her and curbed himself. "I'm sorry, Mother. But a chit like that—not eighteen!"

"I am eighteen," asserted Nell, crimson-cheeked. "And I won't be kept in order by you. So there!"

He turned his eyes upon her, and she shrank in spite of herself. "You will be kept in order by me," he said. "You will go up to your room now—do you hear?—and stay there for the rest of the night."

"I!" said Nell. "What—now?" She stood gripping the back of the chair in which she had been about to seat herself. Her face had gone from red to white. Her eyes stared straight across the table at her brother.

He answered her without moving, but his single word fell like a blow. "Now!"

There followed a terrific silence, during which it seemed to Frances that the wills of the man and the girl were in visible conflict, though neither stirred or spoke. In the end there came a faint gasp from Nell, and she turned to obey.

Lucy started up with hysterical crying. "I'm going too, then—I'm going too!"

"You will stay where you are," Arthur said, without turning his gaze from the younger sister.

She dropped back sobbing in her chair, and Nell went wordlessly to the door. Slowly she opened it, slowly passed out, and closed it again.

Mrs. Dermot looked up at her son. "Elsie may take up her supper," she said.

He shrugged his shoulders. "She can do as she likes." He moved to his own place and sat down. His look came to Frances. "Sorry to treat you to this exhibition," he said. "But discipline must be maintained."

She met his look with the utmost directness. "Did you say discipline or tyranny?" she said.

She expected anger, was prepared for it, even desired it. But he only smiled.

"Yes, you may call it that," he said. "But it's in a good cause. Nell is getting above herself. She has got to learn. Lucy,

sit up and behave yourself! You've nothing whatever to cry about. Good heavens, child! Why all this fuss?"

Lucy sobbed some inarticulate words into her handkerchief, and abruptly Frances leaned forward. She spoke in a low tone, very urgently, to Arthur.

"Let her run after Nell and fetch her back!" she said.

She could not have said exactly what prompted the request. It was not primarily pity for either of the two girls. It was the man himself who held her attention at that moment, and an overwhelming desire to move that iron will out of its undeviating course.

But his reception of her interference was disconcerting. Instead of displaying the opposition she had anticipated, he spoke again to the still sobbing girl.

"Dry your eyes, you silly girl, and go and tell Nell to come back!"

Lucy looked up with a gasp of sheer amazement, and Frances found herself gasping too at the utter unexpectedness of his action. Arthur's face wore a cynical expression, but he showed no sign of impatience. "Go on!" he said. "Go and fetch her back and be quick about it!"

Lucy got up and slipped from the room.

"Miss Thorold, may I give you some ham?" said Arthur.

Their eyes met, and she caught a quizzical gleam in his that sent an odd feeling as of tension relaxed through her.

"Thank you," she said.

He proceeded to carve the ham in silence, and as he did so there came the sound of wheels and a horse's feet outside.

"Here they are!" said Mrs. Dermot, in a tone of relief.

"I knew they wouldn't be long," said Elsie.

Arthur's face took an inscrutable look. He said nothing whatever.

Elsie carried round the plates and they began the meal. After a brief pause Nell and Lucy came back into the room and silently resumed their places; but a considerable interval elasped before the opening of the outer door into the scullery told of the entrance of the two latest comers.

MAGGIE came in looking flushed and nervous. Oliver entered behind her, swaggering a little, his bold eyes somewhat fierce.

"What have you been doing?" said Arthur.

He spoke quietly, but his tone was ominous. Maggie threw him one swift glance and then lowered her eyes and sat down.

"Everything's all right," said Oliver, with a touch of aggressiveness. "We thought we'd make a day of it. I'll tell you all about it presently."

"You'll tell me now," Arthur said.

"Oh, all right." Oliver stood with his hand upon the back of Maggie's chair. He bent suddenly over her. "Sure you want me to tell, Maggie?" he said.

She put up a trembling hand in answer. Abruptly he stooped lower and kissed her before them all.

The violent overturning of Arthur's chair as he sprang to his feet brought him upright again with a jerk. He broke in upon the other's furious oath with quick speech that yet was not wholly uncontrolled.

"Yes, you can curse as much as you please," he said. "It won't make a ha'porth of difference now. She is mine—for better, for worse—and you can't undo it. We were married to-day at Fordestown—after we'd sold the pigs."

"Married!" The single word fell with frightful force from Arthur's lips. He put his hand suddenly to his head.

Maggie crouched against her mother, and Mrs. Dermot, pale as death, put her arm about her without a word.

Then across the silence, shrill as the piping of a bird, came Nell's voice. "Well played, Oliver! I wish you luck!"

He turned to her with his winning boyish smile and gripped her outstretched hand across the table.

"Thanks, little 'un! You're a brick, and I'll always remember it."

Arthur's hand fell and clenched at his side. He spoke—not to Oliver, but to Maggie.

"Is this true?"

She looked up at him with an effort. Through quivering lips she answered him, "Yes."

"You are—actually married—to this—damned—clod?"

Oliver straightened himself sharply. "I'll answer that question," he said. "Come outside and I'll show you the exact stuff he's made of!"

But at that Maggie left her mother's sheltering arm and got up. She stood between the two men, breathing very fast.

"You sha'n't fight about me," she said. "You've nothing to fight about, for I belong to Oliver and always shall, from now on. I've the right—as every woman has—to choose my own mate, and I've chosen. That's all there is to it."

Arthur did not attempt to question her right. He merely lifted a hand and pointed to the door.

"You can go," he said, "you and your mate. And you will never enter Tetherstones again."

"Yes, you can curse as much as you please. It won't make a ha'porth of difference now She is mine. We were married to-day at Fordestown."

He did not look at Oliver. He had scarcely looked at him from the outset. But at that the young man's wrath boiled over, and he compelled attention.

"You think that you and your infernal Tetherstones count a couple of damns with either of us, do you?" he said. "You think that because poor Nan broke her heart here, we'd be pining to do the same! You're a damn fool, Arthur, that's what you are. And now I've got what I want, I take pleasure in telling you so. You're too grand a swell to fight the likes of me. You don't fight your own labourers! No, I thought not. But you can't prevent 'em telling you the truth or taking a woman out of your family and giving her happiness —common or garden happiness—in place

of this mass ot corruption that you're pleased to call your family honour. I've got my honour, too, but it's not your sort, thank God. I'm just a plain man, and I've no frills of any kind. But I've got the right to marry the girl who loves me, and there's no one on this earth can come between us now. If they think they can, well, let 'em try, that's all. Just let 'em try!"

Arthur stood motionless. His look was turned upon Oliver, but he made no attempt whatever to check the fierce torrent of words so forcibly poured out. To Frances he had the look of the gladiator sorely wounded yet holding his ground for the sake of that honour which Oliver so bitterly denounced. And her heart went out to the man in a sudden wild rush of sympathy that seemed to sweep away all rational thought. She found herself on her feet and quivering with a burning desire to help him in some way, though how she knew not. The deadly pallor of his face, the awful fixity of his eyes, were more than she could bear.

He spoke—this time to Oliver; but he did not deign to waste a single word in answer to the furious challenge hurled at him.

"Let me see your marriage certificate!" he said.

HIS words fell with the utmost calm, and Frances wondered if she were the only one in the room who knew how cruelly deep was his wound.

Oliver drew a hard angry breath, as though he found himself unexpectedly held in check by some force unknown. He stared for a moment, then with a sullen air thrust a hand inside his coat. He brought out a paper which he flung down in front of Arthur.

"There you are. You'll find it all in order," he said. "You won't undo that knot in a hurry."

Arthur picked up the document, opened and scanned it, then held it in silence before his mother. She laid an imploring hand upon his.

"Arthur—Arthur!" she said, an anguished break in her voice. "Don't do anything in a hurry! I can't lose another of my girls like my darling Nan."

"I'm afraid you have lost her, Mother," he replied, with a species of grim gentleness, "since she has chosen to go."

"I haven't chosen to go!" burst from Maggie. She turned and flung her arms closely about her mother. "If I have to go, it'll be your doing, not mine and not Oliver's. He's willing to stay. He's told me so. In fact, he was willing to go on here in the same old way and not to tell, only I felt I couldn't bear it. He's thought of me and my happiness all through—all through. And we've loved each other for years. You don't know what love is. You can never possibly understand. But Mother knows—Mother knows."

"Yes, I know," said Mrs. Dermot, and the tragedy of the quiet utterance was as though she stood beside one dead.

There was a brief pause as of involuntary reverence, then Oliver spoke, his voice steady and deferential. "It was only for the mother's sake we came back," he said. "I'd sooner have gone to the other end of the world myself. But—well, Maggie's happiness was at stake, so I couldn't."

"Maggie's happiness!" An exceedingly bitter note sounded in Arthur's voice. "Was it for Maggie's happiness, may I ask, that you persuaded her to do this thing?"

Oliver's look flashed back to him. He stiffened himself afresh for battle. Couldn't he see, Frances asked herself desperately? Were they all blind to the agony of this man's soul?

"Yes, it was," he flung back hotly. "It was for her happiness. Don't you dare to question that, Arthur Dermot! You're not in a position to question it. There's not a woman on this earth who would trust her happiness to you. And you know it."

The blow went home. Frances felt it as if it had been directed against herself. She did not need to see the stricken look in Arthur's eyes. She knew without seeing, and on the instant she acted, for further inaction was unendurable.

Before he could make any reply to the thrust, she was in the lists beside him.

"You are wrong!" she said, and her voice rang clear and triumphant before them all. "You are utterly wrong! I would!"

She turned to him, quivering with the greatness of the moment, to find his eyes upon her with that in them which thrilled her to the soul.

She stretched forth a trembling hand. "I would!" she repeated, and this time she spoke to him alone. "You know I would!"

He caught her hand and closely held it. "Yes, I know—I know!" he said. Then curtly to Oliver, "That's enough for the present. Sit down and have some supper, you and Maggie too! We'll discuss this thing in the morning. Frances, sit here!"

He pulled forward a chair, and she sat beside him at the head of the table. But save for that one brief command he did not speak to her or look in her direction again.

No one else ventured to address a word to her. Only Mrs. Dermot leaned forward and gently pressed her hand.

(To be continued.)

G. WODEHOUSE FUNNIER THAN EVE

SEP 5 192

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

THE
SEVEN WONDERS OF BRITAIN
BY
SIR GILBERT PARKER H.A.VACHELL
LORD LEVERHULME H.de VERE STACPOOLE
SIR HARRY JOHNSTON A.C.BENSON

101030

For the Kiddies - FREE!

An exciting picture story of a fairy prince, a beautiful princess, a wicked baron and a wizard. Just the sort of story the children love to read. Beautifully illustrated in colours. Presented by the proprietors of

WRIGHT'S COAL TAR SOAP

Send 1d. stamp (don't forget to give your name and address) to Dept. 108, Wright, Layman and Umney, Ltd., Southwark, London, S.E.1.

Player's Navy Cut Tobacco

Beautifully Cool and Sweet Smoking.

Packed in varying degrees of strength to suit every class of Smoker.

Player's Gold Leaf Navy Cut -	Per oz.
Player's Medium Navy Cut -	**1/-**
Player's Tawny Navy Cut -	
Player's "White Label" Navy Cut	**10½D**

Also Player's NAVY CUT DE LUXE (a development of Player's Navy Cut) packed in 2-oz. and 4-oz. AIRTIGHT TINS at **2/4** and **4/8** respectively.

Player's Navy Cut Cigarettes

Have a world-wide reputation. They are made from fine quality Virginia Tobacco and sold in two strengths—Mild and Medium.

MILD (Gold Leaf)	**MEDIUM**
100 for **5/10**; **50** for **2/11**	**100** for **4/8**; **50** for **2/5**
24 for **1/5**; **12** for **8½d.**	**20** for **11½d.**; **10** for **6d.**

In Packets and Tins from all Tobacconists and Stores.

JOHN PLAYER & SONS, Nottingham.

A Branch of The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd. P.847

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
September, 1923.

SUDDENLY THOSE ON THE HIGH DECKS OF THE "BERENGARIA" CLUTCHED AT THE RAILS IN HORROR. THE OLD GENTLEMAN IN THE DINGHY WAS CAUGHT IN THE MAMMOTH SUCK OF THE GREAT LINER.

(See page 222.)

THE PERFECT CRIME

by

"SEAMARK"

ILLUSTRATED BY H. K. ELCOCK

MR. JEROLD POGARTY evolved and committed the Perfect Crime. The capitals are excusable, for no less a critic than the Attorney-General himself, in rising to state the case for the Crown, thus described Mr. Pogarty's experiment.

It was a gem, a shining example of the higher art of transgression: a crime so perfectly conceived, so scrupulously prepared, and so immaculately carried out that it placed Mr. Jerold Pogarty, at a stroke, in a high place among the world's master criminals. As a work of art it stands; the lesser lights reverence it as a guide and a model upon which to mould their own efforts, and at least one company promoter raises his hat even now whenever the name of Pogarty is mentioned.

It was the only criminal offence Mr. Pogarty ever committed in his life. He spent two critically delightful years in its consummation, although he could have finished the matter off in a couple of minutes had he wished. But he preferred the years to the minutes, which is why he attained perfection.

It succeeded brilliantly.

And yet it failed. It failed so lamentably and so needlessly that, in the awful moment when the crash came and the Law gazed into his eyes, stark and malignant, Mr. Jerold Pogarty laughed, laughed hysterically at the comedy of his own error.

It is a disturbing, yet nevertheless unassailable, fact that every man has, at some time or another, seriously contemplated committing one really worth-while crime, one that would place him and his family for ever beyond the harassing worry of the great struggle. He has done that just as assuredly as he has, at some time or another, seriously contemplated the question of suicide.

Where Mr. Pogarty differed, utterly and entirely, from the vast majority was that he was one of the infinitesimal few who possessed the ability, the callousness, the courage, *and* the opportunity to transmute the thought into the deed. And he proceeded to do so with the same calm, orderly dignity that characterized every other action of his smooth, unruffled life.

He began committing his crime on a Saturday, exactly two years before he actually took up his pen and wrote a few figures on the wrong side of the legal line. On that day several things happened to Mr. Pogarty that had never happened before.

To begin with, Mr. Pogarty got to the bank that morning an hour late. That had never happened before. For twenty years, fifteen minutes to ten had always seen Mr. Pogarty hanging up his hat on his own private peg. There was never more than a few seconds in it either way. Why should there be? Mr. Pogarty always caught the same train, and the bank was only three hundred and forty-seven steps from the station.

But that morning there had been a suicide on the train, and that had never happened before. Some poor half-demented creature, battered and beaten in the great struggle and lacking one of the essentials for committing one really worth-while job, had suddenly grasped up at a courage big enough to do the biggest job of all.

Mr. Pogarty gazed at the open door. He muttered "Dear *me!*" and gazed dully round as though to assure himself that the compartment really was empty.

He mechanically pulled the communication cord—and he had never done that before. Because he was the sole witness, he was requested by a policeman to "just pop round to the station, sir, just for a few minutes, if you don't mind, sir—just a mere formality, you know, sir, just to make out a proper statement, sir."

Mr. Pogarty popped round to the station, by the side of a walking uniform—and that had never happened before.

He discovered that policemen are a ponderously decent set of fellows, albeit nearly as much addicted to immovable routines as he was himself.

They made him an hour late. They insisted on making him an hour late. They insisted on doing that as calmly and as sincerely as they apologized for so doing.

HE went up the bank steps slowly, passed in through a palatial temple of counters and columns, counting-houses and cash, and went into his own private office. As he closed the door he caught the warning whisper of a junior clerk to his chum: "'Shh! boys. Old Pogarty has turned up!"

His hat stopped half-way to the peg.

Old Pogarty! He felt a cold, clammy hand sliding all over his skin. Old Pogarty! He had never heard himself called that before. For a painful moment the power of thought slid out of his brain, and his face went tense as though he awaited the horrific explosion of a shell he had already seen drop. Then he stared Destiny straight in the eyes. And Destiny laughed at him.

He saw himself standing, bareheaded and bewildered, at the grim half-way house on the crest of the hill. It was labelled the Abattoir of Illusions, the Slaughterhouse of Dreams. Behind him, all the grand hopes, the splendid ambitions, the shining ideals of youth streamed away to a far horizon. There they lay, resplendent, magnificent, a glorious panoply, woven of cloth-of-gold on the precious loom of youth, all ablaze with the brilliance, the bloom, and the beauty of the days when his life was young. And it was fading fast! His frightened eyes saw it receding hour by hour, dimming and flattening to a dull, dead monotone of memory. Like the glorious, golden confidence of youth, it was dying; in a little while it would be gone—gone beyond all dreaming and desiring. It became a dreadfully silent procession of shattered illusions, hollow ambitions, and broken ideals, slipping back inexorably into the shadows. And ahead lay the sunset. Full and square in the path he must tread, the great plain went falling away, unchecked, remorseless, to where the red embers of the dying fires lit up the journey's end. He stood, gazing wild-eyed at the tragedy of life.

And Destiny hugged itself at the spectacle, Destiny being privileged to see the funny side of the man standing in the borderland of forty.

"Go to, old fool!" it tittered. "What are you but old? Hair gone, teeth gone, vigour gone, digestion going, rheumatism coming, you'll be an old 'un in no time. Don't stare at me like that—hundreds and thousands of myriad millions have fought their way up that side of the hill, and they *all* shy at the sunset. Death? Why, man, there are so many countless impis of dead in the soil that the bread you ate this morning was grown in the dust of the dead. That cocky little devil who called you 'Old Pogarty' just now—he will be a back number himself almost before he knows what's what. That's the only little bit of satisfaction you get out of this business. Excuse me laughing, won't you, but you *do* look a silly fish standing there with your mouth open. But there, they all do. Right down through the ages I've stood here, watching the millions pass. Armies of them, legions of them, all fighting and struggling like mad to get a look over the top of that hill. And they all rear up and plunge like startled horses when they get their first sight of the sunset. Tee hee! Pass along there, old fool; make way for the millions yet to come. This is where you *wish!*"

Mr. Pogarty's hat completed its journey. He stood and stared at it for a moment, not quite certain as to how it got there. Then he sat down very gingerly to think things out. Man is by nature a selfish animal. At a crisis he is apt to think in terms of personal possessions. Mr. Pogarty did. Somewhat to his own surprise, he found that nine-tenths of his were abstract. Even so, they were beyond price.

Twenty years of faithful service in the throne-rooms of cash and credit. A few hundreds put by for the rainy day that came along every now and then to remind him of others coming. A brilliantly yet unconsciously established reputation for absolute dependability, honesty, and sobriety. A bachelorhood equally solidly founded. A meticulous brain. A perfect knowledge of every phase and facet of the working system of the bank. A board that might, or might not, bestow on him "some little token of appreciation, some little memento of the high esteem, admiration, and regard in which the whole of the directorate had always held him, throughout the long years of his, etc., etc.," when the time came

for them to kick him a little farther down the road to the sunset.

There was a lot more, too; such as a horror of genteel poverty.

It was at that moment that Mr. Pogarty's criminal complex functioned. As a criminal, he passed from the potential to the intentional. The idea of committing one magnificent declension, which until then had been wholly subconscious and subservient, suddenly became definite. It became a reality, one of his personal possessions.

Mr. Pogarty was not a little perturbed at the brutal casualness of it. His amazed brain demanded a reaction, a touch of the humdrum, to bring it to earth. He found himself signing his name on a pile of letters and documents. They had been placed on his desk for that purpose. That had been his first job in the morning for years and years, putting his signature to a great sheaf of papers and things. They were all perfectly in order, of course. They always were. The secretaries saw to that. A long mechanical succession of signatures went crawling along under a long succession of " Yours faithfully."

Pogarty's was rather a neat signature, he thought. It looked well. The quaint little flourish to the initial " J " and the trim little pull-back loop of the final " y " created the necessary incisiveness about a signature that was known and honoured throughout banking circles all over the City.

While he was writing he began to visualize the absurd simplicity of the idea that had lain dormant at the back of his mind ever since he first detected the weaknesses in the bank's system. " No banking system can be perfect," he assured himself, " for the simple reason that the final balance is struck in figures instead of actual gold-weight in the opposite scale-pan. And figures will always be open to jugglery."

He began to toy with his idea. He fondled it as would a connoisseur some priceless old art treasure. All the week-end he pondered it, turning it this way and that, testing odd little bits of it, working out minor little details of it with the analytical delicacy of a chess master proving out a problem game. He studied it, inspected it, examined it piece by piece, put it under the microscope of his meticulous brain, turned

He caught the warning whisper of a junior clerk to his chum: "'Shh! boys. Old Pogarty has turned up."

it upside down and inside out, reassembled the whole scheme and mentally rehearsed the final working out of each incident. Then he ascended to the pinnacle of intentional criminality. He made it his hobby.

His perfect idea became his pastime and his recreation, his first and only love. He revelled in it. His hours of ease were spent in sublimating it to the highest pitch of perfection. His plan deserved it, for he had found the means of effectually eliminating that bugbear of all criminals, the hue and cry. He wanted to live his subsequent life at his ease, without having to experience the slightest qualm or fear. And he knew that it could be done.

He decided on the most suitable amount to negotiate.

"Forty thousand pounds," he murmured, speculatively. "That is the ideal figure. It is the lowest I shall require and the highest I can utilize without making a bulge in the market elsewhere. Most decidedly, forty thousand is the ideal figure."

Having arrived at that decision, he took a prolonged look at himself in the glass. Certainly that young blighter of a junior had been a trifle premature. Mr. Jerold Pogarty did not look old. He was dapper, neat, natty, and as straight as a backboard. His complexion was clear and his eyes as bright and keen as steel. Admittedly he was semi-bald and his teeth were a bit groggy, but he wore his clothes exceptionally well, and there was not a trace of what one might call elderly-spread below his waistcoat. He had a small sandy-buff moustache which suited him admirably. The wee touch of pomposity in his manner became him as naturally as did his morning coat and white spats.

Mr. Jerold Pogarty decided that that particular identity should slowly wane in Threadneedle Street and be transported bodily, except the moustache, to his future home, which he decided would be St. Albans, as being a quiet, exclusive little place and within half an hour of town. That was only one brilliant facet of his idea. He was to manufacture a false identity right under the board's nose and live an artificial life before their eyes. His real self he proposed to efface and reserve for his own subsequent use later on in St. Albans. The next morning he turned up at the bank wearing spectacles. They were plain glass lenses, but his friends were not to know that. So they just looked at him and shook their sympathetic heads.

FROM that moment Mr. Jerold Pogarty, of Norwood and Threadneedle Street, became half of himself. That is, he became one of two entirely separate and distinct personalities. The one went to the bank regularly every morning, performed his duties in the same suave, faultless manner, lunched at the same table with the same friends, went home at the same time, and never lapsed from punctuality again. The only notable change in him was that slowly but surely his eyesight failed. Strength by strength he found it necessary to increase the magnifying power of his lenses until, before many months had sped, he blinked wistfully at the directorate from behind a couple of pebbles a quarter of an inch thick. But when he was alone he pushed them up on to his forehead, and at other times, unless he was being addressed personally, he closed his eyes, for Mr. Pogarty was proudly jealous of his vision.

Later on other changes appeared in him, or became noticeable for the first time. His knees had lost their spring. He was apt to stand just a trifle bent, as though his tendons were feeling the years, and he shuffled ever such a trifle when he walked. These were the most marked of the other perfectly-portrayed little signs of age creeping upon the body of Mr. Pogarty. But he also spoke mumblingly because his teeth were out, and Colonel Calhoun, of the board, was "quite certain the old devil had put on four inches and a stone since last year."

Sir Wilmot shrugged. "Well, well, that's the way of life, Colonel. We all come to it, you know. Though I must say I always admired old Pogarty's figure—sort of hoped I might wear half as well when the fifties loomed ahead. But he certainly has cracked up. His teeth have all gone to pot too."

"Um—looks bad. Not quite the thing. Man can't talk decently to our class of clients. Not quite the thing. Looks bad."

"Yes, well, there it is. His articulation, I know, is painfully senile, but I understand he has some miserable affection of the gums. They are so beastly soft and tender it is absolutely impossible for him to wear false teeth. Poor old boy has my sympathy, but—ah!—as you say."

The other half of Mr. Jerold Pogarty remained exactly as the real Mr. Pogarty always was. The only thing that changed in *him* was his name, which was Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson. He was a smart, neat, dapper little gentleman with a delightful little place down at St. Albans. He fell quite in love with the old city; he loved its quiet peace and the tasteful tone of its residential quarters. Indeed, his one regret was that his wretchedly plebeian business imposed necessary absences upon him, for Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson was a dried fruit importer with many business connections at what he was

pleased to call the smelly end of the Mediterranean.

For two years without a break he sedulously cultivated the atmosphere of his new entity. Two years was the lowest limit of time in which he considered he could safely accomplish the metamorphosis. He took a meticulous delight in its gradual development, while the new conception of *Old* Pogarty as gradually materialized at the bank.

Each evening Mr. Jerold Pogarty, of Norwood and Threadneedle Street, got into a first-class compartment of the fast train down from St. Pancras, and half an hour later Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson, of St. Albans and the smelly end of the Mediterranean, got out.

TOWARDS the end of the second year it was a very shuffling figure that got in; a figure that was over at the knees, decidedly stout, spoke with labial senility, wore a little sandy-buff moustache, and bumped into piles of luggage in spite of very strong glasses. He always got into an empty compartment, an easy task these days. On the way down he unwound a great many swathes of very fine silk from around his person, swathes that had been added to month by month with studied care. He took off his sandy-buff moustache, discarded his pebble glasses, inserted a double set of very perfect false teeth, squared his shoulders, straightened his knees, and dapper little Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson got out.

In St. Albans he established his own perfectly regulated menage. He paid his rent, rates, and taxes there, had a bank account there, posted letters and circulars to himself there, called himself up now and then on the telephone, and on several occasions telegraphed to himself to go in a hurry to the smelly end of the Mediterranean. He entertained his own little circle of friends there, and was entertained in return. He was barbered and tailored and haberdashed there, and registered his vote in the Council elections. He wrote letters to the local press and prevailed upon Inspector Gorrel, of the local police, to keep his eye on his little place during his necessary absences.

Inspector Gorrel liked him very much indeed. "A very nice old party," he declared in the mess-room. "We could do with a few more like him in the city. Gave me a tenner for the fund with all the pleasure in the world, he did. 'What's that, my dear Gorrel,' he says; 'the Police Orphanage? Most decidedly I will give you something. Mustn't let the little kiddies suffer, must we? I'd like to make it more, but this wretched Smyrna business has played the deuce with dried fruit,' he says. 'I think I shall make it an annual subscription; come along and see me every year,' he says, and handed me over a tenner as though it was no more than a 'tanner.'"

"Good old sport. Dried fruits, is he?"

"Yes. Travels a goodish deal where that stuff grows. That's why he has to go away sometimes. But he says he is retiring very soon, and maybe will settle down here permanently."

He always stayed in St. Albans overnight and had breakfast about eight o'clock. His housekeeper was a quiet, staid old soul who superintended such matters for him with comfortable care. Except at week-ends he never troubled her again till after tea. He had friends in Harpenden, Luton, Hitchin, Watford, and all the little country towns around, whom he was frequently visiting. His housekeeper could testify to that.

But after breakfasting, Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson did not go out paying duty calls. He caught the nine o'clock fast train to St. Pancras, *en route* for Threadneedle Street, and a day's labour that was an absolute model of dignified propriety.

He took a very real delight in perfecting his two personalities. They lived in his heart as completely as a masterpiece lives in the soul of an artist. Throughout the long course of the two years he applied himself with infinite care to the detection of weaknesses or possibilities of improvements in his plan. Thus one day it appeared that old Pogarty's hearing was not what it used to be. He had developed an annoying habit of saying "Eh?" with his hand behind his ear when juniors spoke to him, and "I beg your pardon?" when addressed by the board. That came about after overhearing a chance remark of Gorrel's to the station sergeant. "Eyes like an 'awk and ears like a pointer, he has," whispered that gentleman with proprietary pride when Wilderson stopped him in the street to give him another subscription to the Police Orphanage Fund. He saw in the remark yet another opportunity of creating another alibi of contrast; and so Mr. Jerold Pogarty began going deaf.

He had moved from his flat at Norwood to a comfortable hotel in the neighbourhood, so that his sudden change of habits should give no cause for comment. Night after night and month after month he made the trip to St. Albans with unfailing regularity. On quarter days and at the end of the financial year, when the bank worked at high pressure until far into the night, Mr. Wilderson was called away to the smelly end of the Mediterranean. But at all other times he cultivated the society of St. Albans. He showed himself there as much

as possible, became a patron of various entertainments and movements, rented a pew in the beautiful Abbey there, and even founded a Wilderson Challenge Shield to be competed for annually by the local football teams.

Thus with elegant care and effortless skill he established a thousand witnesses at one end of the line who could swear on oath that Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson, smart, dapper, alert little Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson, had been an honoured and respected citizen of St. Albans for at least two years to their definite knowledge; and that he hadn't left the town for months on end. While at the other end almost as many were quite convinced that poor old Pogarty, who, alas! was failing fast, had discharged his skilled and arduous duties faithfully and well at the bank for as long as they could remember.

Each evening Mr. Jerold Pogarty got into the fast train down from St. Pancras—

The only possible weakness was the train. It was the one connecting link that, unfortunately, could not be eliminated. He had thought of making the journey by car, stopping at some lonely point on the road, and getting into it to change, but that would have created an even more notable link at the garage. Furthermore, it would necessitate his learning to drive a car, an expedient which, at his time of life, would be indiscreet, to say the least. So the train it had to be; and his season ticket was held in the name of Wilderson.

The last and final preparation occasioned him a good deal of thoughtful study. It concerned the demise of Mr. Jerold Pogarty. The ideal location for that old boy's tragic exit had long been firmly fixed in his mind. It was an ideal place; there was not the slightest shadow of a doubt of it. That little strip of coast where England peeps across at the Isle of Wight carried features that dovetailed in perfectly with every single one of his requirements.

He spent his summer holidays there for two years running, maturing his plans and perfecting his arrangements without the slightest suspicion of haste or hurry. He

—and half an hour later Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson got out.

took Gosport as his centre. From there he hired out little sailing dinghies and went for long invigorating trips down the green waters of the Solent, going right up close to the mammoth homing liners. He lowered the little stuns'l, stood up in the boat, and cheered lustily as the splendid vessels swung grandly past him and rounded the point for Southampton.

The boatmen smiled at him. He was a quaint little figure, old Mr. Pogarty. Some said he had the sea in his blood, but it had been denied him. Office stools chained him, and he didn't find out until it was too late that he was born of the old woman of the sea. But he certainly had an abounding, exulting pride in the great ships that came in from the far ends of the oceans.

Even after his plans were all complete and ready for fulfilment, he still dallied with his scheme. He was obsessed with the skill and the beauty of it. It titillated his artistic sense to a point of quiet rapture. He thought of it as a beautifully-constructed machine, waiting stationary, ready at a touch on the master-key to slip smoothly into a veritable poem of motion.

He waited for the summer, and then pressed the master-key. On that day he took up his pen and wrote a few figures on the wrong side of the legal line. The thing was simplicity itself, merely the writing of the right figures in the wrong ledgers. Mr. Pogarty went down to the strong room with the ledgers and returned without them. In his inside pocket were forty thousand pounds in notes and bearer bonds.

He sat in his chair appalled at the simplicity of crime. He was one of the eight men in that building privileged to enter the vaults.

" My dear Mr. Wilderson," he said judicially to himself, " isn't it amazing what simple, tiny, insignificant little actions can make a man a criminal ! The mere twitching of a finger—the gallows ! A simple Yes instead of an equally simple No in a Court of Law—Dartmoor. The mere inscription

of the right figures in the wrong sequence—a living tomb of isolation in a sepulchre of silence. Awful to contemplate."

"I have long pondered the same painful thought," smiled Mr. Wilderson, his fingertips pressed benignly together. "Modern progress seems to have created a system wherein it is easier to commit sin than to prevent it. That, in my humble estimation, is a crime in itself. Think! It is easier to commit a murder, or perjury, or to steal forty thousand pounds than it is to do something really normal, like getting married or having a tooth out. Now, I should never have the courage to get married. It is all very queer and enigmatic—more so, my dear Pogarty, after one has peeped over and seen the sunset."

During the next few days Mr. Jerold Pogarty negotiated the notes without a hitch and without raising the slightest suspicion. The whole thing was done with the utmost discretion.

ON the following Saturday afternoon he made his fall from grace irrevocable. He dropped a letter into the pillar-box, a pitiful, pleading letter that was addressed to the board. He heard the letter drop, and his heart missed a beat, for he realized that letters, once posted, proceed inexorably to their appointed address. No effort of his could regain possession of that letter.

The letter pleaded for forgiveness, prayed for a little charity of thought. He was getting old and something must have gone wrong in his head. Excuses were beyond him; he himself did not know how it had all happened. His confession was utter and complete. Gambling was not for old brains; it had demanded subtler faculties than he possessed. But he had just been jolted into sanity; he had made a slip, a ghastly blunder in his figure jugglery that made discovery inevitable. Forgive—and try to think well of him. It was not he, it was his miserable old brain that had betrayed him. He was taking what he humbly ventured to submit was the bravest course, the course that would give the dear old bank the least trouble and pain. He mentioned one or two little matters that would require immediate attention on Monday morning, and finished the missive with the neat little signature they knew so well.

"Dear *me!*" he reflected. "That is the last time I shall ever sign that name. Most extraordinary, after the thousands and thousands of times I have written that name."

The mail train bore him swiftly to Portsmouth. He crossed over to the Isle of Wight. Early in the morning he booked a bathing cabin for the day. He went in, donned a bathing suit, dressed again, lit the spirit stove, and went out, leaving his suitcase and a flask of hot tea in the cabin. He hung the key on a piece of string round his neck.

He returned to Gosport by motor-boat. In an hour's time the great *Berengaria* was due. The boatmen smiled when the decayed old gentleman asked for a boat. They gave him one and he left thirty pounds deposit on it as he always did—"just in case anything went wrong, for he really wasn't very much of a sailor, you know, and he wouldn't like them to lose by it." He made a round of the marine store dealers and fishing tackle shops and bought a couple of lead sinkers at each.

The boatmen waved him a merry hand as the old "Cheership Party" sailed off. When well out into the fairway he took off his boots and dropped them overboard. Then he took off his collar and tie, waistcoat, shirt, and vest, attached sinkers to them, and watched them sink into the shimmering deeps. "Good-bye, Mr. Pogarty," he murmured, as they sank out of sight. Then, dressed only in jacket, trousers, hat, and socks, but apparently fully clad, he slid away down Channel till he came opposite his bathing hut, where he backed and filled till the *Berengaria* swung into view.

She came on, riding majestically by in a colossal tiering of decks and boats and smoking funnels. He let the sail fall and stood up to wave his hat as the splendid thing swept by, less than thirty yards abeam. She passed. Suddenly those on the high decks clutched at the rails in horror. The old gentleman in the dinghy was in a bad way. He had got caught in the mammoth suck of the great liner and was spinning in the backwash. His boat was tossing desperately. Horrors, he was over!

Bells clanged in the soul of the mammoth. She stopped. A lifeboat struck the water with a sudden splash. Strong arms at the end of strong oars thrust madly towards the pathetic little cockle-shell that lay keel up in the water. They circled and searched and rowed around for over half an hour. Keen eyes peered over the face of the waters; every little bit of weed and wood that broke the surface was chased and scrutinized. For over half an hour they rowed and searched. But they neither rescued nor found the body of Mr. Jerold Pogarty. All they found was his hat.

The lifeboat was recalled and the *Berengaria* proceeded on her way, to report the little tragedy to the shore authorities higher up in Southampton Water.

Mr. Pogarty listened with a thankful heart to the screw-beats of the liner. He was under the boat, clinging calmly to the

centre thwart, breathing easily and deeply with his head a foot out of water inside the overturned hull.

He waited until the thud of the propellers diminished to a faint monody of sound far away in the back blocks of the Channel. He passed away the time in ridding himself of his other clothes. The socks were an awkward business, but he got them off at last. He dropped a lead sinker in each, tied them together at the tops, and let them go. The trousers and jacket went down with the remainder of the weights in the pockets. He tore the little sandy-buff moustache to shreds and put them in his mouth. He unfastened the swimming belt from the centre thwart and adjusted it. Then he dived out from under the hull.

Once well away from the boat, he ejected the moustache and turned all his attentions towards the Isle of Wight shore half a mile away. It took him nearly two hours with long and frequent rests, and he was chilled to the bone by the time he was mingling with the Sunday afternoon crowd bathing from the beach. It was an intense effort of will-power, but he stayed in among them for another ten minutes before edging in towards the sands. He emerged, in his bathing suit, a quiet, normal holiday-maker, coming in after a pleasant afternoon's swim.

He went into his hut, his whole body one vast ache of weary coldness. He almost fainted with the violence of the reaction of the heated interior of the hut. He collapsed on a chair and rested, sipping hot tea from the flask to get the biting flavour of the sea-water off his palate.

After a vigorous towelling he dressed. There was every mortal thing he wanted in the suit-case, right down to hair pomade, cash, and the Sunday paper—and a telescope. Through the glass he saw that the *Berengaria* had lost little time in reporting the accident. A clutter of small boats jostled about round the overturned craft. But they never found the poor old chap's body. He must have sunk like a log, they said.

MR. WILFRID WILDERSON, immaculately dressed, gay and debonair, went out on to the beach, mixed with the crowd, and read his paper. He returned his bathing hut key and after a couple of days' delightful sauntering round Cowes and Ryde went back to St. Albans.

Not until he got into the train at Portsmouth did the reaction set in. He trembled like an aspen. But it was the trembling of a great and thrilling pride at the beauty of the thing he had done. Not only had he succeeded magnificently—the Monday and Tuesday morning papers told him how perfect that success had been—but he had smacked Destiny's face. Boldly, openly, and flatly he had landed fair and square on its jeering cheek.

In St. Albans he entered into the fullness of his desires. On the fruits of the Perfect Crime he lived as he had always longed to live—the life of a perfect gentleman in an aura of utter bliss and contentment. Mr. Jerold Pogarty was dead and forgotten. Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson continued his calm, orderly way without a qualm or a tremor.

The weeks and the months slipped by. They passed on the oiled wheels of delectable pleasure and tasteful ease. He retired from business and settled down permanently in St. Albans. He withdrew the name of Wilfrid Wilderson, Ltd., from the various trade directories in which it had appeared for over two years. He bought a beautiful car to run him up to town whenever he felt that way inclined—he had a very natural aversion to the railway. He presented his challenge shield when the winter drew into the spring, and he celebrated his definite retirement from business by giving Gorrel an extra contribution to the Orphanage Fund.

Inspector Gorrel was delighted. He was secretary of the local branch of the fund, and he tried to express his clumsy thanks as he stowed the five ten-pound notes in the crown of his cap. Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson signed the subscription list and smilingly pushed it across to him.

" Please don't thank me, inspector," he murmured. " I am sincerely pleased to be able to be of any little assistance. The police are a jolly fine set of fellows and I'm delighted to help you in any little way in my humble power. Besides which, the orphanage is a very worthy——"

He broke off and stared at the inspector. Gorrel, white-faced and almost nervous, was standing over him with a pair of terrible-looking handcuffs in his fingers.

" What—what on earth—what is the matter, inspector ? " stammered Wilderson.

" Sorry I am—sir——" muttered Gorrel, apologetically. For the life of him he couldn't help that " sir."

" But—but—what——"

" Look ! " Gorrel held out the subscription list with a shaking hand.

Wilderson looked—and looked again. He began to laugh hysterically.

Mr. Wilfrid Wilderson had signed the wrong name.

A SAMSON IN PETTICOATS

Amazing Feats of Strength of a Hindu Lady.

by St. Nihal Singh

Miss Tarabai.

IN the days of the Old Testament man possessed incredible strength, and woman robbed him of it. In the world of to-day the position has been reversed. It is Delilah who has the strength, while Samson looks on in wonderment.

As I sat, not so very long ago, at Bangalore, the seat of Government of the progressive Maharaja of Mysore, witnessing the marvellous feats of strength shown by Miss Tarabai, such thoughts ran through my mind. At either side, and behind me, the audience facing the ring in which she performed consisted entirely of men. We had all been taught from our childhood up to believe that the Hindu woman was a frail creature who lived behind the purdah and who needed to be protected by us. We had paid our rupees to see Miss Tarabai take up the challenge of out-doing man—which seems to have a strange fascination for the twentieth-century woman everywhere in the world—and to beat him in the one sphere of life which he has specially reserved for himself—namely, that of manly strength.

Within earshot of me a youngster was firing a volley of questions at an elderly man who appeared to be his grandfather or grand-uncle, judging from the evident disparity in years. "Do you think, sir," the little chap said, "that all those pictures that we saw on the placards, which made us buy the tickets, represented truth? Will this lady really perform all those feats of strength which we saw in the pictures? Will she ever be able to lift a heavy stone or drag a loaded cart by her hair? Now, will she?"

Age smiled benignly at youth. The old man called the boy's attention to the bell that was tinkling. Soon he would see for himself whether the posters with their attractive pictures told the truth or lied.

"But, sir," persisted the lad, "there is no woman in the ring. There are only clowns tomfooling and some gymnasts going through exercises much as we do at school. Where is the strong woman? Where is her hair? Where is the heavily-laden cart? Oh, why doesn't she appear?"

And I must say that the impatience to which the boy gave expression was fully shared by everyone in the great audience.

After we had had plenty of time thus to fidget, the Samson in petticoats finally entered the ring. Though I sat not very far from where she stood, and the electric light shone brilliantly, yet she did not look to me to be particularly strong. She was handsome, with large, sparkling dark eyes and a round face with clean-cut, regular, strong features. A dot of vermilion between her thickly-pencilled brows betokened that she was not a widow.

If you met her in a drawing-room with a sari gracefully draped about her statuesque

Copyright, 1923, by St. Nihal Singh.

figure, your eyes would wander towards her again and again, and you would find yourself wondering who that remarkable-looking woman was. But as she stood in the sawdust ring she was dressed in a fantastic costume such as no other Hindu woman ever affected.

She wore a rather tight-fitting blue velvet jacket buttoned almost to the neck, just showing a man's collar and tie. Her limbs were covered with knickers of the same material, coming barely to her knees, over the tops of long blue woollen stockings. On her feet were patent-leather pumps such as men wear with evening dress. Her head was bare. Her coal-black hair, rather long and wiry, but inclined to curl a bit about the forehead, fell in a mass over her shoulders, free from ribbon or other fastening.

She wore no jewellery of any description, but the front of her jacket was covered over with gold medals which had been given to her by Maharajas and other great personages and municipalities, in appreciation of her performance.

Miss Tarabai was of average height. Her figure was somewhat rounded out—perhaps a trifle buxom. Her arms did not seem to bulge out or show any unusual muscular development. Any woman slightly inclined to be stout would have had as large arms as she had.

While these thoughts were rapidly flitting through my mind a deep hush of expectancy fell upon the people assembled in the huge tent. Two bare-headed men, their long shirts over their pyjamas, walked into the centre of the arena and placed two rough wooden chairs at a distance from one another just short of Miss Tarabai's height.

After the men had withdrawn she lay down with her head on a thick velvet cushion placed on one chair, and her feet on the other. Except for such support as was thus afforded, her body was suspended in the air.

As soon as she was comfortably settled into position and gave the word, the two men began to lift a huge stone. It looked large and solid. By the effort which they were making to hoist it, it was quite evident that it was of great weight. Someone in the ring shouted out that if any person questioned that it was less than a quarter of a ton, he was welcome to come and try to shift it, or even to weigh it.

A neighbour of mine inquired why the weight was expressed in an English instead of an Indian measure. The reply was: "For the simple reason that the *maund* (in which weights are generally reckoned in India) varies in different parts of the country."

When the men had lifted the stone to the height of the chair and were placing it on Miss Tarabai's chest, every person in the audience held his breath. Everyone expected that, as the attendants removed their hands and the great weight settled down in its place, her chest would cave in, or at least visibly sag.

Even for a man to have that much weight on his breast would be no joke; but for a woman, with her peculiar physical development, the matter became far more serious. Yet, for all one could see, the lady lying on those chairs did not mind the stone any more than if it had been a feather.

After the granite block had rested in that position for a minute or two, the men who had put it there returned, each armed with a powerful sledge-hammer. At a word of command from the lady, they began to strike the rock with their hammers with all the strength they possessed. I sat within four or five feet of them, and could see that they were not shamming.

And the lady lay in front of me, as quiet as quiet could be. She did not turn a hair nor wince a muscle while that stone on her chest was being hammered at, and her body, all but the head and feet, was suspended in the air.

After the men had plied their hammers for a few minutes, they removed the stone from Tarabai's chest and she stood up. While she retired to her dressing tent for a few minutes, they laid cushions upon the floor of the ring, preparatory for the next feat.

BY that time the strong woman had returned, as fresh as she had been when we first saw her, and calmly lay down upon the cushions. The men hoisted a stone twice the size of the one which they had used before, weighing fully eleven hundred pounds, and put it on her chest.

Then they began to ply their sledge-hammers once again, continuing to do so until the sweat ran down their faces in streams. It was a cool night—for India—in the depth of the Indian winter.

Tarabai bore that ordeal with the same ease and grace with which she had borne the earlier one. She did not seem to mind the weight or the hammering the least bit. For all one could see, her chest might have been made of ship's steel.

After a time she swept the stone off her chest with the sweep of one arm, apparently with as much ease as you or I might brush a fly from our face.

She then rolled over and lay face downward, stretched out to her full length. The same stone was placed upon her back—stretching from just below her neck to a point beyond her waist. The hammering

began once again and went on for several minutes.

When the stone was removed from her back, Tarabai got up, unassisted, as lithe as a panther. The blood had rushed to her face, and it looked a bit flushed under her olive skin. But she was not a bit fagged, much less flustered, and walked quite jauntily off to her tent.

The clowns and acrobats did their best to keep us amused until Samson in petticoats returned after the lapse of a few minutes. While gone she had taken the time to smooth her hair, and it hung in two thick plaits as she walked towards us. She had also removed the jacket, but had pinned the gold medals to the shirt beneath it.

In her absence a stone weighing two hundred and forty pounds had been placed at the front of the ring. We all wondered what she was going to do with it. We were not left guessing long. A rope was passed under the stone. One end of it was fastened to one plait, and the other to the other plait of hair.

The boy at my side, who, before the performance, had actually wondered whether or not he was to get his money's worth out of the show, was electrified. "Oh!" he cried, "she is going to do it! She is going to lift the stone with her tresses!"

And she did. Slowly, rhythmically, without the least jerk, the stone began to rise from the ground. It went up a fraction of an inch at a time, until there were at least three inches between it and the ground, without touching her legs.

Tarabai stood almost as erect as a dart. Her head was slightly bent back. Her eyes were practically shut. Her face was not distorted in the slightest degree. Her arms were stretched out and her feet were planted firmly on the ground, a little farther apart than usual.

She stood in that posture for two minutes, keeping the weight quite still. It was a wonderful feat, and electrified the audience.

Hardly had the echo of the cheering died away when a cart was pushed into the ring, and men and boys from the audience were invited to climb into it. A pointed spear was fastened to the end of its shaft,

Tarabai pressed her forehead against the sharp point of the spear, and pushed the cart back several feet. Every moment the audience expected that it would pierce into her brain and blood would spurt from the wound it had inflicted. But nothing untoward happened.

Tarabai supporting on her chest a stone weighing fully eleven hundred pounds, on which two men are raining blows with their sledge-hammers.

Without resting for a moment after completing that feat, Tarabai lay down upon the cushions hurriedly spread out on the floor, as she had done some time earlier. A pad was placed across her chest, and securely fastened behind. As the cart laden with boys and men was drawn along, one of its wheels passed over the prostrate woman's left arm, then over her body, and finally over her right arm. The wheel seemed to flatten her a bit as it went over her. But immediately it had passed she rose and bowed and smiled to the audience, which was lustily cheering her.

For the final feat four spears—two at each end, with their sharp ends pointing skywards—were arranged in an oblong. A fifth spear was fixed in the centre, its point projecting half an inch above the others.

The strong woman was lifted and placed full length on the spears. As she lay her whole weight rested upon the points.

If she felt any pain, she did not betray any sign of it, nor did she seem in a particular hurry to get off the spears.

How did she do it? That question was on every lip. Various conjectures were vouchsafed.

"The points must be dull," one man was heard to remark.

"But still they are points," responded another.

"And her whole weight rested upon them for two or three minutes," added a third.

"Even if it was no more than a case of balancing," said a doubting Thomas, "it was a wonderful feat."

"Why worry," a wise man added. "That is her secret. If you knew it, maybe you would be doing the same thing—and making as much money doing it as she does."

During the interval, while Samson in petticoats was resting for a few minutes, her manager came to me and asked me to go into her dressing tent and have a chat with her. As she jumped down from the points of the spears, on which she had been resting as lightly as thistledown, and after a quick bow and a flashing smile vanished behind the curtains, I made my way as quickly as I could among the rows of chairs and the spectators who were vacating them to the part of the arena behind which she had retired.

I had expected to find Tarabai all flattened out, lying crumpled up on a couch *à la* Pavlova at the end of "Le Mort Cygne," her body sore where the stones had bruised it and the spear points tortured it. I had fancied that if I did not find her in a dead faint, I would find her sipping stimulants, or perhaps puffing at a cigarette.

Imagine, then, my surprise when I found the lady sitting in a none too comfortable chair, cool looking, and almost as fresh as if she had just risen after sleep and had not yet performed her toilette. The only unusual thing that I could see was that there were rather deep shadows under her eyes. which, I noticed when shaking hands with her, were brilliant and illumined a face wonderfully expressive of emotion, not at all made up, as one would expect a professional's to be for a performance in public. Her arms were held out full length and attendants were massaging them.

She sat there just as she had come from the ring. Her manager, a tall, lean man, curiously enough very religiously inclined, told me, in answer to my inquiries, that she had not taken a sip of anything, though she would have some sherbet half an hour later. She had never in her life touched narcotics or alcoholic liquor, and did not much care even for tea, cocoa, or coffee—in fact, for any hot drink. The only thing which she allowed to pass her lips after her performance was a few almonds with the skins carefully removed, which she found sustaining. Sometimes she mixed the almonds with a few *kismis* (Indian sultanas), and found the combination pleasant and strengthening. She was a strict vegetarian, living on vegetables, pulses, rice, nuts, fruit, and milk.

Raising from the ground a stone weighing two hundred and forty pounds by means of ropes tied to her hair.

"Do you not feel exhausted after such a strenuous performance?" I asked the strong woman. In view of what her face told me, the question seemed inane; but it served to open up the conversation.

"Not particularly," the lady replied, with modesty which had the old-world air of the zenana about it. "I am used to this sort of thing, do it nightly, and on days when there is a *matinée* I have to go through it twice in less than twelve hours. One gets used to anything."

"It must be a great strain, nevertheless," I remarked, more to keep the conversation going than for any other reason.

"Strain?" She took up my refrain. "Yes, a strain, if you were to do it all with your body; but I don't do it entirely with my body. I use my mind as well."

"You do those marvellous feats of strength with your mind, and not with your body only?"

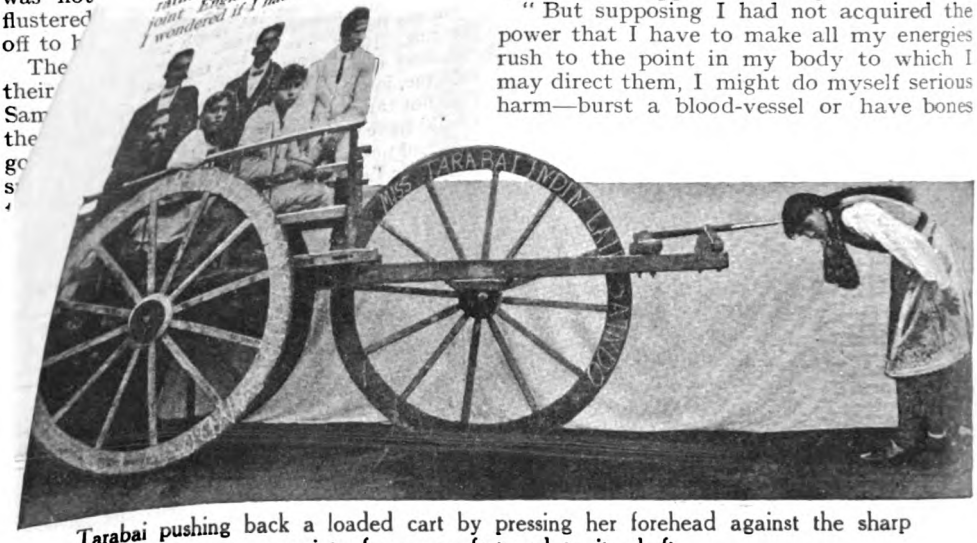
began once again an
minutes.

When the
back, Taraba
as a panther
face, and i
under her
was not
flustered
off to h

The
their
Sam
the
go
s

228

I exclaimed, incredulously. We were talking half in Hindustani, which is fast becoming the lingua franca of India, and half in English, rather slow, hesitating, somewhat out-of-joint English, but quite understandable. I wondered if I had misunderstood her.



Tarabai pushing back a loaded cart by pressing her forehead against the sharp point of a spear fastened to its shaft.

" Yes. Mind. Not entirely body, That is what I said. That is what I mean," she replied.

" Will you please explain ? " I asked.

" It is quite simple, once you understand it. I did not invent the system, I merely got it from our sages, learned in the spiritual lore of yesterday—sages whom we still have with us, but whom we see not, and if we see we flout.

" What I do before the audience I do simply because I have gone through a very lengthy course, and not an easy one, of learning how to concentrate all the faculties which one is born with upon any object which I am intent upon. When I appear before the audience and begin my performance, all I do is to call upon the training through which I have passed during long years to make me utterly oblivious of those who are all about gazing at me. Having forgotten the world, I next use the same training to requisition all the life forces within me to concentrate themselves upon the particular point or points of my body where the attack or attacks are to fall.

" If, for instance, that boulder which you saw is to lie upon my breast or upon my back, and strong men are to strike it with mighty blows from their heavy sledge-hammers, I direct all the energies which I possess to concentrate themselves in my breast or my back, as the case may be. The life forces thus controlled and focused are stronger than the force which two men exert with their mighty arms against my breast or back, and I am therefore able to bear their blows without any damage to my tissues, and without any appreciable fatigue.

" But supposing I had not acquired the power that I have to make all my energies rush to the point in my body to which I may direct them, I might do myself serious harm—burst a blood-vessel or have bones broken, or collapse altogether, whereas now I not only do not feel any fatigue, but come out of the ordeal without a scratch or a bruise."

" And do you lie on the sharp points of those spears for so many minutes at a time—lie so quietly, so reposedly, even seemingly happy—because you can direct your life forces to the various portions of your back into which the points are pressing cruelly ? " I asked.

" Yes, of course that is what I do," she said. " You will perhaps find it easier to understand my method, or I should say the old Indian method, if I were to explain that that method gives us control over ourselves. After all, life consists of breath, strength consists of breath. I mean, if there is no breath there is no life—and if breathing ceases, there is no strength.

" If one is, therefore, to be master over life, one must be master over breath. That is what our *yogis* have been trying to do for thousands of years, through their system of *pranayam*—control of breath. They have so systematized the work that if one has the patience to go through the prescribed exercises one can at will breathe through the left or right nostril, or shift breathing from one side to the other, just as one pleases. One can even suspend breathing

and go off into a complete trance, or one can regulate the breath according to a given measure of time, and produce, so to speak, any physical rhythm which may be required.

"Having explained that much, the rest is easy. If you like so to put it, that feat of lying on the spear-points may be described as a feat accomplished through deep breathing. By controlling the intake of fresh air and the expulsion of exhausted air, I give a sort of springiness to my body which, so to speak, levitates it and keeps the points of the spears from piercing my flesh."

"And, in essence, much the same is true when you push the cart with the spear sticking into your forehead?" I inquired.

"That is a matter of life forces being concentrated at the time in the middle of my forehead, hardening the flesh and bone and preventing me from doing any harm to myself.

"These things may sound very strange to you, for you, having spent so many years of your life in the West, may be hearing some of them for the first time. But, believe me, they are true—they have been tried and proved to be true. Any person who possesses the will and the patience to try can practise them and find them to be true."

"Where did you learn all this philosophy, and where did you have your training?" I asked the strong woman.

"Ah! That is a long story," she replied. And then she gave me the outstanding particulars of a life full of tragedy and adventure such as falls to the lot of few mortals. Putting together the facts which I gathered from her that night and the next morning, when I interviewed her at the house where she was stopping, the story may be thus summarized :—

Miss Tarabai was born some thirty years ago in a small town in Rajputana, the home of the chivalrous, doughty Rajputs, who trace their descent from the Sun God, and are proud of the kingly (raj) blood which flows in their veins. Her parents belonged to one of these Rajput (kingly) clans.

When the girl was some seven or eight years of age, a great famine devastated the land. Her parents, too proud to seek charity, perished from starvation—first the father and later the mother succumbing. The child could have gone to relatives and shared their terrible sufferings; but something within her made it impossible for her to do so.

In a moment of madness, as she then thought, she took it into her head to discard her girl's clothes and ornaments, get into boy's clothing, which she had no difficulty in procuring, and sally out of her village on a dark night, before the news of her mother's death could reach her relatives. Thus she went out into the great wide world to find her fortune, and to see for herself the wonders which lay beyond the countryside where she was born.

Before the young adventurer had proceeded very far, she fainted by the wayside from hunger, and would have perished but for some passing *fakirs* (holy men), who were

Protected only by a pad across her chest, Tarabai allows the wheel of a cart laden with boys and men to be drawn across her body and arms.

going from one place of pilgrimage to another, coming upon what appeared to them to be the corpse of a little boy. Upon close examination they found that life was not altogether extinct, though the breathing was very faint. They managed to revive the child, and finding that he (as they took her to be) was homeless and anxious to go on with them, they took her along as a member of their party.

With these *fakirs* Tarabai, successfully preserving her masquerade as a boy, spent several years, travelling thousands of miles on foot, visiting one shrine after another until she had seen almost every holy place. They initiated her into the mysteries of breath control, and the control of physical and mental forces.

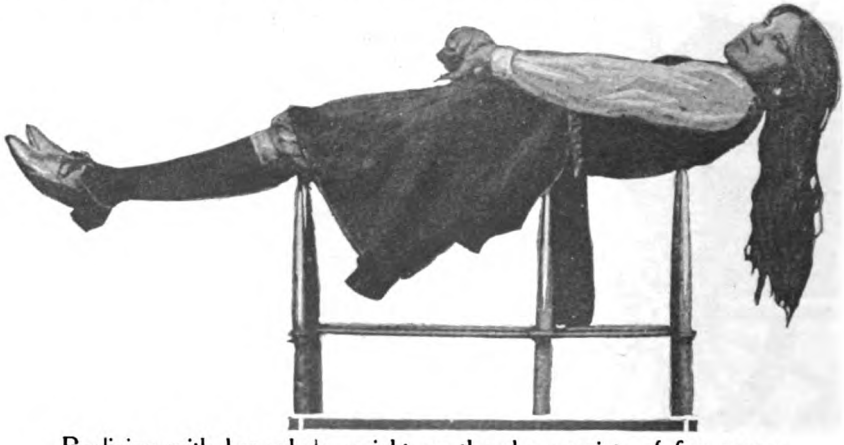
In time, however, Nature made it impossible for the girl to keep the secret of her sex. When the *fakirs* found her out, they took her to an orphanage in a large city in Western India, kept by a man interested in physical culture. There she gave up the practice of posing as a boy, and dressed in girl's clothing. But she had long passed the age when most girls of her class married, and she had learned to live, in the open air, a free and easy life, to perform breathing exercises, and thereby to strengthen her body and mind. She, therefore, found it impossible to settle down into the groove prescribed for the Hindu woman, and went on with her exercises.

Soon Tarabai was touring the country as a professional athlete. She was exhibiting her strength at a bioscope show when the manager failed, owing her a large sum of money. The only chance she had to recover what was due to her was to take over the company and run the business herself. With no capital, with no one to back her, but with unbounded faith in herself and in the Providence that had protected her all her life, she did not hesitate to accept the responsibilities entailed by ownership.

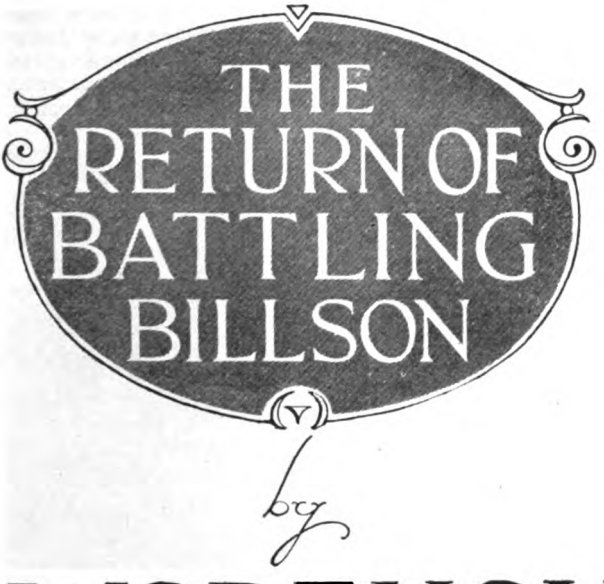
Tarabai's faith in herself has been more than justified. As years have passed, she has branched out more and more, until to-day she is one of the most successful professionals in India. The paraphernalia of her company—the tents, seats, costumes, and accessories of all kinds—requires many railway wagons to be moved from place to place. Her expenses mount up to several hundred pounds a week, and her net income, even then, is very large.

I followed her trail all over India, from north to south and from east to west. Wherever I went, I found placards announcing that she would soon be showing in the place—placards that were some of them quite old—I found that she had been and gone long before.

The Indian strong woman is very generous with her money, especially in helping educational institutions and homes for widows and orphans—for she never forgets that she was left an orphan. The performance I witnessed at Bangalore was given for the benefit of the Arya Samaj of that city, to which religious sect belonged her manager, whom she married a fortnight or so after I first met her. On the night of this benefit she came into the ring between the acts and delivered a fluent address upon the work of the Arya Samaj. To listen to the words pouring from her lips in a steady stream was to feel that Miss Tarabai would have made her mark in the field of politics had she been born in the West. Direct in her arguments, magnetic of personality, she held that great audience as spellbound by her speech as she had by her marvellous feats of strength.



Reclining with her whole weight on the sharp points of five spears.



by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

IT was a most embarrassing moment, one of those moments which plant lines on the face and turn the hair a distinguished grey at the temples. I looked at the barman. The barman looked at me. The assembled company looked at us both impartially.

"Ho!" said the barman.

I am very quick. I could see at once that he was not in sympathy with me. He was a large, profuse man, and his eye as it met mine conveyed the impression that he regarded me as a bad dream come true. His mobile lips curved slightly, showing a gold tooth; and the muscles of his brawny arms, which were strong as iron bands, twitched a little.

"Ho!" he said.

The circumstances which had brought me into my present painful position were as follows. In writing those stories for the popular magazines which at that time were causing so many editors so much regret, I was accustomed, like one of my brother-authors, to take all mankind for my province. Thus, one day I would be dealing with dukes in their castles, the next I would turn right round and start tackling the submerged tenth in their slums. Versatile. At the moment I happened to be engaged upon a rather poignant little thing about a girl called Liz, who worked in a fried-fish shop in the Ratcliff Highway, and I had accordingly gone down there to collect local colour. For whatever Posterity may say of James Corcoran, it can never say that he shrank from inconvenience where his Art was concerned.

The Ratcliff Highway is an interesting thoroughfare, but on a warm day it breeds thirst. After wandering about for an hour or so, therefore, I entered the Prince of Wales public-house, called for a pint of beer, drained it at a draught, reached in my pocket for coin, and found emptiness. I was in a position to add to my notes on the East-end of London one to the effect that pocket-pickery flourishes there as a fine art.

"I'm awfully sorry," I said, smiling an apologetic smile and endeavouring to put a debonair winsomeness into my voice. "I find I've got no money."

It was at this point that the barman said "Ho!" and moved out into the open through a trick door in the counter.

"I think my pocket must have been picked," I said.

"Oh, do you?" said the barman.

He gave me the idea of being rather a soured man. Years of association with

Copyright, 1923, by P. G. Wodehouse.

unscrupulous citizens who tried to get drinks for nothing had robbed him of that fine fresh young enthusiasm with which he had started out on his career of barmanship.

"I had better leave my name and address," I suggested.

I flung myself on that barman. I forgot entirely that he could put me out of action with one hand.

"Who," inquired the barman, coldly, "wants your blinking name and address?"

These practical men go straight to the heart of a thing. He had put his finger on the very nub of the matter. Who did want my blinking name and address? No one.

"I will send——" I was proceeding, when things began to happen suddenly. An obviously expert hand gripped me by the back of the neck, another closed upon the seat of my trousers, there was a rush of air, and I was rolling across the pavement in the direction of a wet and unsavoury gutter. The barman, gigantic against the dirty white front of the public-house, surveyed me grimly.

I think that, if he had confined himself to mere looks—however offensive—I would have gone no farther into the matter. After all, the man had right on his side. How could he be expected to see into my soul and note its snowy purity? But, as I picked myself up, he could not resist the temptation to improve the occasion.

"That's what comes of tryin' to snitch

drinks," he said, with what seemed to me insufferable priggishness.

Those harsh words stung me to the quick. I burned with generous wrath. I flung myself on that barman. The futility of attacking such a Colossus never occurred to me. I forgot entirely that he could put me out of action with one hand.

A moment later, however, he had reminded me of this fact. Even as I made my onslaught an enormous fist came from nowhere and crashed into the side of my head. I sat down again.

" 'Ullo ! "

I was aware, dimly, that someone was speaking to me, someone who was not the barman. That athlete had already dismissed me as a spent force and returned to his professional duties. I looked up and got a sort of general impression of bigness and blue serge, and then I was lifted lightly to my feet.

My head had begun to clear now, and I was able to look more steadily at my sympathizer. And, as I looked, the feeling came to me that I had seen him before somewhere. That red hair, those glinting eyes, that impressive bulk—it was my old friend Wilberforce Billson and no other—Battling Billson, the coming champion, whom I had last seen fighting at Wonderland under the personal management of Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge.

" Did 'e 'it yer ? " inquired Mr. Billson.

There was only one answer to this. Disordered though my faculties were, I was clear upon this point. I said, " Yes, he did hit me."

" 'R ! " said Mr. Billson, and immediately passed into the hostelry.

It was not at once that I understood the significance of this move. The interpretation I placed upon his abrupt departure was that, having wearied of my society, he had decided to go and have some refreshment. Only when the sound of raised voices from within came pouring through the door did I begin to suspect that in attributing to it such callousness I might have wronged that golden nature. With the sudden reappearance of the barman—who shot out as if impelled by some imperious force and did a sort of backwards fox-trot across the pavement—suspicion became certainty.

The barman, as becomes a man plying his trade in the Ratcliff Highway, was made of stern stuff. He was no poltroon. As soon as he had managed to stop himself from pirouetting, he dabbed at his right cheekbone in a delicate manner, soliloquized for a moment, and then dashed back into the bar. And it was after the door had swung to again behind him that the proceedings may have been said formally to have begun.

What precisely was going on inside that bar I was still too enfeebled to go and see. It sounded like an earthquake, and no meagre earthquake at that. All the glassware in the world seemed to be smashing simultaneously, the populations of several cities were shouting in unison, and I could almost fancy that I saw the walls of the building shake and heave. And then somebody blew a police-whistle.

unscrupulous citizens who tri[illegible] drinks for nothing had rob[illegible] fine fresh young ent[illegible] had started out on [illegible]

"I had bette[illegible] address," I sug[illegible]

The Return of Barding Billson

There is a magic about the sound of a policeman's whistle. It acts like oil on the most troubled waters. For an instant lull in the tumult. Glasses ceased to break, voices were hushed, and a moment later out came Mr. Billson, standing not upon the order of his going. His nose was bleeding a little and there was the scenario of a black eye forming on his face, but otherwise there seemed nothing much the matter with him. He cast a wary look up and down the street and sprinted for the nearest corner. And I, shaking off the dreamy after-effects of my encounter with the barman, sprinted in his wake. I was glowing with gratitude and admiration. I wanted to catch this man up and thank him formally. I wanted to assure him of my undying esteem. Moreover, I wanted to borrow sixpence from him. The realization that he was the only man in the whole wide East-end of London who was likely to lend me the money to save me having to walk back to Ebury Street gave me a rare burst of speed.

It was not easy to overtake him, for the sound of my pursuing feet evidently suggested to Mr. Billson that the hunt was up, and he made good going. Eventually, however, when in addition to running I began to emit a plaintive "Mr. Billson! I say, Mr. Billson!" at every second stride, he seemed to gather that he was among friends.

"Oh, it's you, is it?" he said, halting.

He was plainly relieved. He produced a murky pipe and lit it. I delivered my speech of thanks. Having heard me out, he removed his pipe and put into a few short words the moral of the whole affair.

"Nobody don't dot no pals of mine not when I'm around," said Mr. Billson.

"It was awfully good of you to trouble," I said with feeling.

"No trouble," said Mr. Billson.

"You must have hit that barman pretty hard. He came out at about forty miles an hour."

"I dotted him," agreed Mr. Billson.

"I'm afraid he has hurt your eye," I said, sympathetically.

"Him!" said Mr. Billson, expectorating with scorn. "That wasn't him. That was his pals. Six or seven of 'em there was."

"And did you dot them too?" I cried, amazed at the prowess of this wonder-man.

"'R!" said Mr. Billson. He smoked awhile. "But I dotted 'im most," he proceeded. He looked at me with honest warmth, his chivalrous heart plainly stirred to its depths. "The idea," he said, disgustedly, "of a —— —— —— 'is size"—he defined the barman crisply and, as far as I could judge after so brief an acquaintanceship, accurately—"goin' and dottin' a little —— like you!"

The sentiment was so admirable that I could not take exception to its phraseology. Nor did I rebel at being called "little." To a man of Mr. Billson's mould I supposed most people looked little.

"Well, I'm very much obliged," I said.

Mr. Billson smoked in silence.

"Have you been back long?" I asked, for something to say. Outstanding as were his other merits, he was not good at keeping a conversation alive.

"Back?" said Mr. Billson.

"Back in London. Ukridge told me that you had gone to sea again."

"Say, mister," exclaimed Mr. Billson, for the first time seeming to show real interest in my remarks, "you seen 'im lately?"

"Ukridge? Oh, yes, I see him nearly every day."

"I been tryin' to find 'im."

"I can give you his address," I said. And I wrote it down on the back of an envelope. Then, having shaken his hand, I thanked him once more for his courteous assistance and borrowed my fare back to Civilization on the Underground, and we parted with mutual expressions of good will.

THE next step in the march of events was what I shall call the Episode of the Inexplicable Female. It occurred two days later. Returning shortly after lunch to my rooms in Ebury Street, I was met in the hall by Mrs. Bowles, my landlord's wife. I greeted her a trifle nervously, for, like her husband, she always exercised a rather oppressive effect on me. She lacked Bowles's ambassadorial dignity, but made up for it by a manner so peculiarly sepulchral that strong men quailed before her pale gaze. Scotch by birth, she had an eye that looked as if it was for ever searching for astral bodies wrapped in winding-sheets—this, I believe, being a favourite indoor sport among certain sets in North Britain.

"Sir," said Mrs. Bowles, "there is a body in your sitting-room."

"A body!" I am bound to say that this Phillips-Oppenheim-like opening to the conversation gave me something of a shock. Then I remembered her nationality. "Oh, you mean a man?"

"A woman," corrected Mrs. Bowles. "A body in a pink hat."

I was conscious of a feeling of guilt. In this pure and modest house, female bodies in pink hats seemed to require explanation. I felt that the correct thing to do would have been to call upon Heaven to witness that this woman was nothing to me, nothing.

" I was to give you this letter, sir."

I took it and opened the envelope with a sigh. I had recognized the handwriting of Ukridge, and for the hundredth time in our close acquaintanceship there smote me like a blow the sad suspicion that this man had once more gone and wished upon me some frightful thing.

" My dear old horse,—

" It's not often I ask you to do anything for me . . .

I laughed hollowly.

" My dear old horse,—

" It's not often I ask you to do anything for me, laddie, but I beg and implore you to rally round now and show yourself the true friend I know you are. The one thing I've always said about you, Corky my boy, is that you're a real pal who never lets a fellow down.

" The bearer of this—a delightful woman, you'll like her—is Flossie's mother. She's up for the day by excursion from the North, and it is absolutely vital that she be lushed up and seen off at Euston at six-forty-five. I can't look after her myself, as unfortunately I'm laid up with a sprained ankle. Otherwise I wouldn't trouble you.

" This is a life and death matter, old man, and I'm relying on you. I can't possibly tell you how important it is that this old bird should be suitably entertained. The gravest issues hang on it. So shove on your hat and go to it, laddie, and blessings will reward you. Tell you all the details when we meet.

" Yours ever,

" S. F. Ukridge.

" P.S.—I will defray all expenses later."

Those last words did wring a faint, melancholy smile from me, but apart from them this hideous document seemed to me to be entirely free from comic relief. I looked at my watch and found that it was barely two-thirty. This female, therefore, was on my hands for a solid four hours and a quarter. I breathed maledictions—futile, of course, for it was a peculiar characteristic of the demon Ukridge on these occasions that, unless one were strong-minded enough to disregard his frenzied pleadings altogether (a thing which was nearly always beyond me), he gave one no chance of escape. He sprang his foul schemes on one at the very last moment, leaving no opportunity for a graceful refusal.

I PROCEEDED slowly up the stairs to my sitting-room. It would have been a distinct advantage, I felt, if I had known who on earth this Flossie was of whom he wrote with such airy familiarity. The name, though Ukridge plainly expected it to touch a chord in me, left me entirely unresponsive. As far as I was aware, there was no Flossie of any description in my life. I thought back through the years. Long-forgotten Janes and Kates and Muriels and Elizabeths rose from the murky depths of my memory as I stirred it, but no Flossie. It occurred to me as I opened the door that, if Ukridge was expecting pleasant reminiscences of Flossie to form a tender bond between me and her mother, he was building on sandy soil.

The first impression I got on entering the room was that Mrs. Bowles possessed the true reporter's gift for picking out the detail that really mattered. One could have said many things about Flossie's mother, as, for instance, that she was stout, cheerful, and far more tightly laced than a doctor would have considered judicious; but what stood out above all the others was the fact that she was wearing a pink hat. It was the largest, gayest, most exuberantly ornate specimen of head-wear that I had ever seen, and the prospect of spending four hours and a quarter in its society added the last touch to my already poignant gloom. The only gleam of sunshine that lightened my darkness was the reflection that, if we went to a picture-palace, she would have to remove it.

" Er—how do you do? " I said, pausing in the doorway.

" 'Ow do you do? " said a voice from under the hat. " Say ' 'Ow-do-you-do? ' to the gentleman, Cecil."

I perceived a small, shiny boy by the window. Ukridge, realizing with the true artist's instinct that the secret of all successful prose is the knowledge of what to omit, had not mentioned him in his letter; and, as he turned reluctantly to go through the necessary civilities, it seemed to me that the burden was more than I could bear. He was a rat-faced, sinister-looking boy, and he gazed at me with a frigid distaste which reminded me of the barman at the Prince of Wales public-house in Ratcliff Highway.

" I brought Cecil along," said Flossie's (and presumably Cecil's) mother, after the stripling, having growled a cautious greeting, obviously with the mental reservation that it committed him to nothing, had returned to the window, " because I thought it would be nice for 'im to say he had seen London."

" Quite, quite," I replied, while Cecil, at the window, gazed darkly out at London as if he did not think much of it.

" Mr. Ukridge said you would trot us round."

" Delighted, delighted," I quavered, looking at the hat and looking swiftly away

again. "I think we had better go to a picture-palace, don't you?"

"Naw!" said Cecil. And there was that in his manner which suggested that when he said "Naw!" it was final.

"Cecil wants to see the sights," explained his mother. "We can see all the pictures back at home. 'E's been lookin' forward to seein' the sights of London. It'll be an education for 'im, like, to see all the sights."

"Westminster Abbey?" I suggested. After all, what could be better for the lad's growing mind than to inspect the memorials of the great past and, if disposed, pick out a suitable site for his own burial at some later date? Also, I had a fleeting notion, which a moment's reflection exploded before it could bring me much comfort, that women removed their hats in Westminster Abbey.

"Naw!" said Cecil.

"'E wants to see the murders," explained Flossie's mother.

She spoke as if it were the most reasonable of boyish desires, but it sounded to me impracticable. Homicides do not publish formal programmes of their intended activities. I had no notion what murders were scheduled for to-day.

"'E always reads up all the murders in the Sunday paper," went on the parent, throwing light on the matter.

"Oh, I understand," I said. "Then Madame Tussaud's is the spot he wants. They've got all the murderers."

"Naw!" said Cecil.

"It's the places 'e wants to see," said Flossie's mother, amiably tolerant of my density. "The places where all them murders was committed. 'E's clipped out the addresses and 'e wants to be able to tell 'is friends when he gets back that 'e's seen 'em."

A profound relief surged over me.

"Why, we can do the whole thing in a cab," I cried. "We can stay in a cab from start to finish. No need to leave the cab at all."

"Or a bus?"

"Not a bus," I said firmly. I was quite decided on a cab—one with blinds that would pull down, if possible.

"'Ave it your own way," said Flossie's mother, agreeably. "Speaking as far as I'm personally concerned, I'm shaw there's nothing I would rather prefer than a nice ride in a keb. Jear what the gentléman says, Cecil? You're goin' to ride in a keb."

"Urgh!" said Cecil, as if he would believe it when he saw it. A sceptical boy.

IT was not an afternoon to which I look back as among the happiest I have spent. For one thing, the expedition far exceeded my hasty estimates in the matter of expense. Why it should be so I cannot say, but all the best murders appear to take place in remote spots like Stepney and Canning Town, and cab-fares to these places run into money. Then, again, Cecil's was not one of those personalities which become more attractive with familiarity. I should say at a venture that those who liked him best were those who saw the least of him. And, finally, there was a monotony about the entire proceedings which soon began to afflict my nerves. The cab would draw up outside some mouldering house in some desolate street miles from civilization, Cecil would thrust his unpleasant head out of window and drink the place in for a few moments of silent ecstasy, and then he would deliver his lecture. He had evidently read well and thoughtfully. He had all the information.

"The Canning Town 'Orror," he would announce.

"Yes, dearie?" His mother cast a fond glance at him and a proud one at me. "In this very 'ouse, was it?"

"In this very 'ouse," said Cecil, with the gloomy importance of a confirmed bore about to hold forth on his favourite subject. "Jimes Potter 'is nime was. 'E was found at seven in the morning underneaf the kitchen sink wiv 'is froat cut from ear to ear. It was the landlady's brother done it. They 'anged 'im at Pentonville."

Some more data from the child's inexhaustible store, and then on to the next historic site.

"The Bing Street 'Orror!"

"In this very 'ouse, dearie?"

"In this very 'ouse. Body was found in the cellar in an advanced stige of dee-cawm-po-sition wiv its 'ead bashed in, pre-zoomably by some blunt instrument."

AT six-forty-six, ignoring the pink hat which protruded from the window of a third-class compartment and the stout hand that waved a rollicking farewell, I turned from the train with a pale, set face, and, passing down the platform of Euston Station, told a cabman to take me with all speed to Ukridge's lodgings in Arundel Street, Leicester Square. There had never, so far as I knew, been a murder in Arundel Street, but I was strongly of opinion that that time was ripe. Cecil's society and conversation had done much to neutralize the effects of a gentle upbringing, and I toyed almost luxuriously with the thought of supplying him with an Arundel Street Horror for his next visit to the Metropolis.

"Aha, laddie," said Ukridge, as I entered. "Come in, old horse. Glad to see you. Been wondering when you would turn up."

Cecil would thrust his unpleasant head out of window and announce, "The Canning Town 'Orror."

"Yes, dearie?" His mother cast a fond glance at him. "In this very 'ouse, was it?"

He was in bed, but that did not remove the suspicion which had been growing in me all the afternoon that he was a low malingerer. I refused to believe for a moment in that sprained ankle of his. My view was that he had had the advantage of a first look at Flossie's mother and her engaging child and had shrewdly passed them on to me.

'I've been reading your book, old man," said Ukridge, breaking a pregnant silence with an overdone carelessness. He brandished winningly the only novel I had ever written, and I can offer no better proof of the black hostility of my soul than the statement that even this did not soften me. "It's immense, laddie. No other word for it. Immense. Damme, I've been crying like a child."

"It is supposed to be a humorous novel," I pointed out, coldly.

"Crying with laughter," explained Ukridge, hurriedly.

I eyed him with loathing.

"Where do you keep your blunt instruments?" I asked.

"My what?"

"Your blunt instruments. I want a blunt instrument. Give me a blunt instrument. My God! Don't tell me you have no blunt instrument."

"Only a safety-razor."

I sat down wearily on the bed.

"Hi! Mind my ankle!"

"Your ankle!" I laughed a hideous laugh, the sort of laugh the landlady's brother might have emitted before beginning operations on James Potter. "A lot there is the matter with your ankle."

"Sprained it yesterday, old man. Nothing serious," said Ukridge, reassuringly. "Just enough to lay me up for a couple of days."

"Yes, till that ghastly female and her blighted boy had got well away."

Pained astonishment was written all over Ukridge's face.

"You don't mean to say you didn't like her? Why, I thought you two would be all over each other."

"And I suppose you thought that Cecil and I would be twin souls?"

"Cecil?" said Ukridge, doubtfully. "Well, to tell you the truth, old man, I'm not saying that Cecil doesn't take a bit of knowing. He's the sort of boy you have to be patient with and bring out, if you understand what I mean. I think he grows on you."

"If he ever tries to grow on me, I'll have him amputated."

"Well, putting all that on one side," said Ukridge, "how did things go off?"

I described the afternoon's activities in a few tense words.

"Well, I'm sorry, old horse," said Ukridge, when I had finished. "I can't say more than that, can I? I'm sorry. I give you my solemn word I didn't know what I was letting you in for. But it was a life and death matter. There was no other way out. Flossie insisted on it. Wouldn't budge an inch."

IN my anguish I had forgotten all about the impenetrable mystery of Flossie.

"Who the devil is Flossie?" I asked.

"What! Flossie? You don't know who Flossie is? My dear old man, collect yourself. You must remember Flossie. The barmaid at the Crown in Kennington. The girl Battling Billson is engaged to. Surely you haven't forgotten Flossie? Why, she was saying only yesterday that you had nice eyes."

Memory awoke. I felt ashamed that I could ever have forgotten a girl so bounding and spectacular.

"Of course! The blister you brought with you that night George Tupper gave us dinner at the Regent Grill. By the way, has George ever forgiven you for that?"

"There is still a little coldness," admitted Ukridge, ruefully. "I'm bound to say old Tuppy seems to be letting the thing rankle a bit. The fact of the matter is, old horse, Tuppy has his limitations. He isn't a real friend like you. Delightful fellow, but lacks vision. Can't understand that there are certain occasions when it is simply imperative that a man's pals rally round him. Now you——"

"Well, I'll tell you one thing. I am hoping that what I went through this afternoon really was for some good cause. I should be sorry, now that I am in a cooler frame of mind, to have to strangle you where you lie. Would you mind telling me exactly what was the idea behind all this?"

"It's like this, laddie. Good old Billson blew in to see me the other day."

"I met him down in the East-end and he asked for your address."

"Yes, he told me."

"What's going on? Are you still managing him?"

"Yes. That's what he wanted to see me about. Apparently the contract has another year to run and he can't fix up anything without my O.K. And he's just had an offer to fight a bloke called Alf Todd at the Universal."

"That's a step up from Wonderland," I said, for I had a solid respect for this Mecca of the boxing world. "How much is he getting this time?"

"Two hundred quid."

"Two hundred quid! But that's a lot for practically an unknown man."

"Unknown man?" said Ukridge, hurt. "What do you mean, unknown man? If you ask my opinion, I should say the whole pugilistic world is seething with excitement about old Billson. Literally seething. Didn't he slosh the middleweight champion?"

"Yes, in a rough-and-tumble in a back alley. And nobody saw him do it."

"Well, these things get about."

"But two hundred pounds!"

"A fleabite, laddie, a fleabite. You can take it from me that we shall be asking a lot more than a measly couple of hundred for our services pretty soon. Thousands, thousands! Still, I'm not saying it won't be something to be going on with. Well, as I say, old Billson came to me and said he had had this offer, and how about it? And when I realized that I was in halves, I jolly soon gave him my blessing and told him to go as far as he liked. So you can imagine how I felt when Flossie put her foot down like this."

"Like what? About ten minutes ago.

when you started talking, you seemed to be on the point of explaining about Flossie. How does she come to be mixed up with the thing? What did she do?"

"Only wanted to stop the whole business, laddie, that was all. Just put the kybosh on the entire works. Said he mustn't fight!"

"Mustn't fight?"

"That was what she said. Just in that airy, careless way, as if the most stupendous issues didn't hang on his fighting as he had never fought before. Said—if you'll believe me, laddie; I sha'n't blame you if you don't—that she didn't want his looks spoiled." Ukridge gazed at me with lifted eyebrows while he let this evidence of feminine perverseness sink in. "His looks, old man! You got the word correctly? His looks! She didn't want his looks spoiled. Why, damme, he hasn't got any looks. There isn't any possible manner in which you could treat that man's face without improving it. I argued with her by the hour, but no, she couldn't see it. Avoid women, laddie, they have no intelligence."

"Well, I'll promise to avoid Flossie's mother, if that'll satisfy you. How does she come into the thing?"

"Now, there's a woman in a million, my boy. She saved the situation. She came along at the eleventh hour and snatched your old friend out of the soup. It seems she has a habit of popping up to London at intervals, and Flossie, while she loves and respects her, finds that from ten minutes to a quarter of an hour of the old dear gives her the pip to such an extent that she's a nervous wreck for days."

I felt my heart warm to the future Mrs. Billson. Despite Ukridge's slurs, a girl, it seemed to me, of the soundest intelligence.

"So when Flossie told me—with tears in her eyes, poor girl—that mother was due to-day, I had the inspiration of a lifetime. Said I would take her off her hands from start to finish if she would agree to let Billson fight at the Universal. Well, it shows you what family affection is, laddie; she jumped at it. I don't mind telling you she broke down completely and kissed me on both cheeks. The rest, old horse, you know."

"Yes. The rest I do know."

"Never," said Ukridge, solemnly, "never, old son, till the sands of the desert grow cold, shall I forget how you have stood by me this day!"

"Oh, all right. I expect in about a week from now you will be landing me with something equally foul."

"Now, laddie——"

"When does this fight come off?"

"A week from to-night. I'm relying on you to be at my side. Tense nervous strain, old man; shall want a pal to see me through."

"I wouldn't miss it for worlds. I'll give you dinner before we go there, shall I?"

"Spoken like a true friend," said Ukridge, warmly. "And on the following night I will stand you the banquet of your life. A banquet which will ring down the ages. For, mark you, laddie, I shall be in funds. In funds, my boy."

"Yes, if Billson wins. What does he get if he loses?"

"Loses? He won't lose. How the deuce can he lose? I'm surprised at you talking in that silly way when you've seen him only a few days ago. Didn't he strike you as being pretty fit when you saw him?"

"Yes, by Jove, he certainly did."

"Well, then! Why, it looks to me as if the sea air had made him tougher than ever. I've only just got my fingers straightened out after shaking hands with him. He could win the heavyweight championship of the world to-morrow without taking his pipe out of his mouth. Alf Todd," said Ukridge, soaring to an impressive burst of imagery, "has about as much chance as a one-armed blind man in a dark room trying to shove a pound of melted butter into a wild-cat's left ear with a red-hot needle."

ALTHOUGH I knew several of the members, for one reason or another I had never been inside the Universal Sporting Club, and the atmosphere of the place when we arrived on the night of the fight impressed me a good deal. It was vastly different from Wonderland, the East-end home of pugilism where I had witnessed the Battler make his *début*. There, a certain laxness in the matter of costume had been the prevailing note; here, white shirt-fronts gleamed on every side. Wonderland, moreover, had been noisy. Patrons of sport had so far forgotten themselves as to whistle through their fingers and shout badinage at distant friends. At the Universal one might have been in church. In fact, the longer I sat, the more ecclesiastical did the atmosphere seem to become. When we arrived, two acolytes in the bantam class were going devoutly through the ritual under the eye of the presiding minister, while a large congregation looked on in hushed silence. As we took our seats, this portion of the service came to an end and the priest announced that Nippy Coggs was the winner. A reverent murmur arose for an instant from the worshippers, Nippy Coggs disappeared into the vestry, and after a pause of a few minutes I perceived the familiar form of Battling Billson coming up the aisle.

There was no doubt about it, the Battler did look good. His muscles seemed more cable-like than ever, and a recent hair-cut had given a knobby, bristly appearance to his head which put him even more definitely than before in the class of those with whom the sensible man would not lightly quarrel. Mr. Todd, his antagonist, who followed him a moment later, was no beauty—the almost complete absence of any division between his front hair and his eyebrows would alone have prevented him being that—but he lacked a certain *je-ne-sais-quoi* which the Battler pre-eminently possessed. From the first instant of his appearance in the public eye our man was a warm favourite. There was a pleased flutter in the pews as he took his seat, and I could hear whispered voices offering substantial bets on him.

"Six-round bout," announced the *padre*. "Battling Billson (Bermondsey) versus Alf Todd (Marylebone). Gentlemen will kindly stop smoking."

The congregation relit their cigars and the fight began.

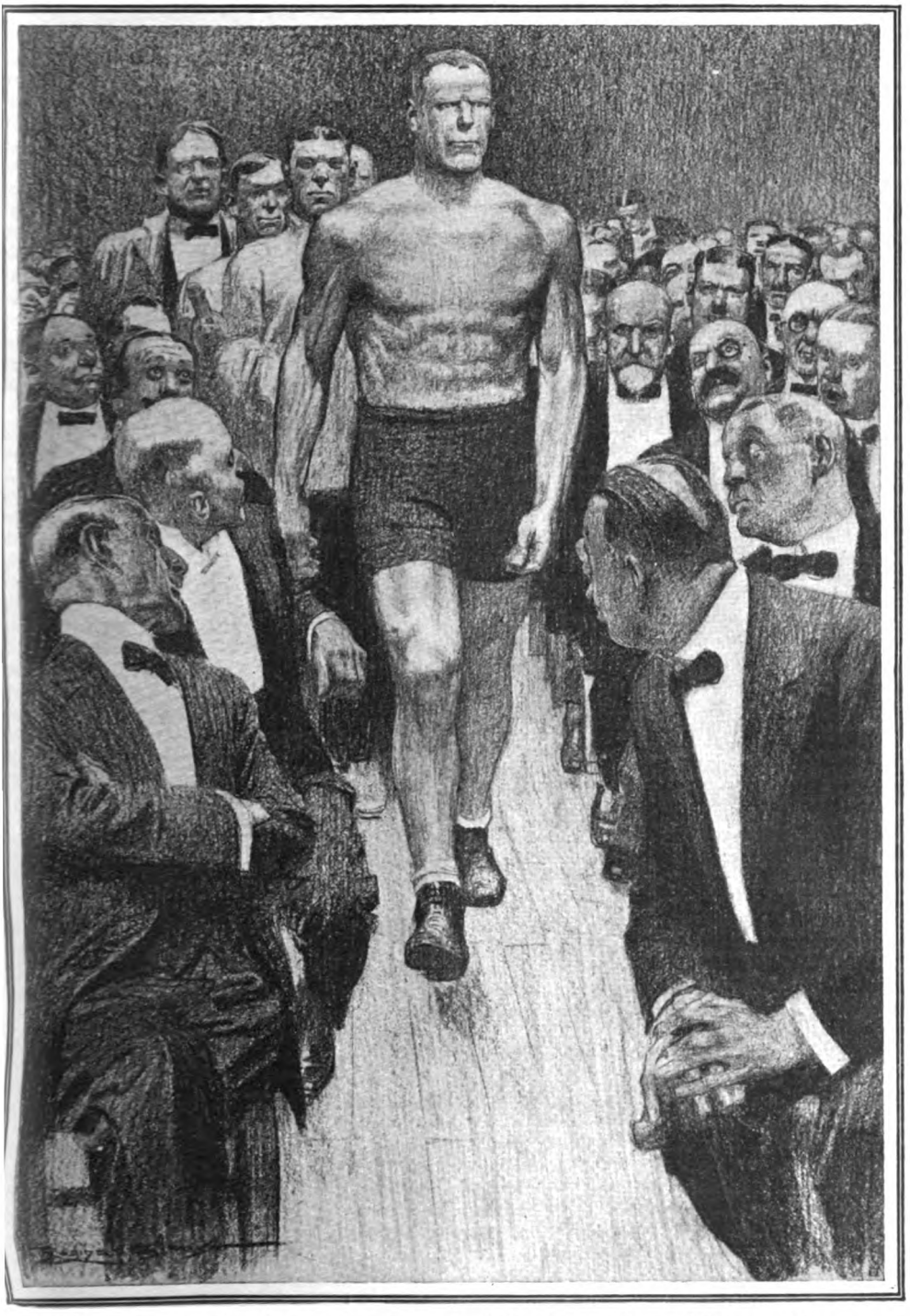
BEARING in mind how vitally Ukridge's fortunes were bound up in his *protégé's* success to-night, I was relieved to observe that Mr. Todd opened the proceedings in a manner that seemed to offer little scope for any display of Battling Billson's fatal kind-heartedness. I had not forgotten how at Wonderland our Battler, with the fight in hand, had allowed victory to be snatched from him purely through a sentimental distaste for being rough with his adversary, a man who had had a lot of trouble and had touched Mr. Billson's heart thereby. Such a disaster was unlikely to occur to-night. It was difficult to see how anyone in the same ring with him could possibly be sorry for Alf Todd. A tender pity was the last thing his behaviour was calculated to rouse in the bosom of an opponent. Directly the gong sounded, he tucked away what little forehead Nature had given him beneath his fringe, breathed loudly through his nose, and galloped into the fray. He seemed to hold no bigoted views as to which hand it was best to employ as a medium of attack. Right or left, it was all one to Alf. And if he could not hit Mr. Billson with his hands, he was perfectly willing, so long as the eye of authority was not too keenly vigilant, to butt him with his head. Broad-minded—that was Alf Todd.

Wilberforce Billson, veteran of a hundred fights on a hundred scattered water-fronts, was not backward in joining the revels. In him Mr. Todd found a worthy and a willing playmate. As Ukridge informed me in a hoarse whisper while the vicar was reproaching Alf for placing an elbow where no elbow should have been, this sort of thing was as meat and drink to Wilberforce. It was just the kind of warfare he had been used to all his life, and precisely the sort most calculated to make him give of his best—a dictum which was strikingly endorsed a moment later, when, after some heated exchanges in which, generous donor though he was, he had received more than he had bestowed, Mr. Todd was compelled to slither back and do a bit of fancy side-stepping. The round came to an end with the Battler distinctly leading on points, and so spirited had it been that applause broke out in various parts of the edifice.

The second round followed the same general lines as the first. The fact that up to now he had been foiled in his attempts to resolve Battling Billson into his component parts had had no damping effect on Alf Todd's ardour. He was still the same active, energetic soul, never sparing himself in his efforts to make the party go. There was a whole-hearted abandon in his rushes which reminded one of a short-tempered gorilla trying to get at its keeper. Occasionally some extra warmth on the part of his antagonist would compel him to retire momentarily into a clinch, but he always came out of it as ready as ever to resume the argument. Nevertheless, at the end of round two he was still a shade behind. Round three added further points to the Battler's score, and at the end of round four Alf Todd had lost so much ground that the most liberal odds were required to induce speculators to venture their cash on his chances.

And then the fifth round began, and those who a minute before had taken odds of three to one on the Battler and openly proclaimed the money as good as in their pockets stiffened in their seats or bent forward with pale and anxious faces. A few brief moments back it had seemed to them incredible that this sure thing could come unstitched. There was only this round and the next to go—a mere six minutes of conflict; and Mr. Billson was so far ahead on points that nothing but the accident of his being knocked out could lose him the decision. And you had only to look at Wilberforce Billson to realize the absurdity of his being knocked out. Even I, who had seen him go through the process at Wonderland, refused to consider the possibility. If ever there was a man in the pink, it was Wilberforce Billson.

But in boxing there is always the thousandth chance. As he came out of his corner for round five, it suddenly became plain that things were not well with our man. Some chance blow in that last *mêlée* of round four must have found a vital



After a pause of a few minutes I perceived the familiar form of Battling Billson coming up the aisle.

spot, for he was obviously in bad shape. Incredible as it seemed, Battling Billson was groggy. He shuffled rather than stepped; he blinked in a manner damping to his supporters; he was clearly finding increasing difficulty in foiling the boisterous attentions of Mr. Todd. Sibilant whispers arose; Ukridge clutched my arm in an agonized grip; voices were offering to bet on Alf; and in the Battler's corner, their heads peering through the ropes, those members of the minor clergy who had been told off to second our man were wan with apprehension.

Mr. Todd, for his part, was a new man. He had retired to his corner at the end of the preceding round with the moody step of one who sees failure looming ahead. "I'm always chasing rainbows," Mr. Todd's eye had seemed to say as it rested gloomily on the resined floor. "Another dream shattered!" And he had come out for round five with the sullen weariness of the man who has been helping to amuse the kiddies at a children's party and has had enough of it. Ordinary politeness rendered it necessary for him to see this uncongenial business through to the end, but his heart was no longer in it.

And then, instead of the steel and india-rubber warrior who had smitten him so sorely at their last meeting, he found this sagging wreck. For an instant sheer surprise seemed to shackle Mr. Todd's limbs, then he adjusted himself to the new conditions. It was as if somebody had grafted monkey-glands on to Alfred Todd. He leaped at Battling Billson, and Ukridge's grip on my arm became more painful than ever.

A sudden silence fell upon the house. It was a tense, expectant silence, for affairs had reached a crisis. Against the ropes near his corner the Battler was leaning, heedless of the well-meant counsel of his seconds, and Alf Todd, with his fringe now almost obscuring his eyes, was feinting for an opening. There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; and Alf Todd plainly realized this. He fiddled for an instant with his hands, as if he were trying to mesmerize Mr. Billson, then plunged forward.

A great shout went up. The congregation appeared to have lost all sense of what place this was that they were in. They were jumping up and down in their seats and bellowing deplorably. For the crisis had been averted. Somehow or other Wilberforce Billson had contrived to escape from that corner, and now he was out in the middle of the ring, respited.

And yet he did not seem pleased. His usually expressionless face was contorted with pain and displeasure. For the first time in the entire proceedings he appeared genuinely moved. Watching him closely, I could see his lips moving, perhaps in prayer. And as Mr. Todd, bounding from the ropes, advanced upon him, he licked those lips. He licked them in a sinister meaning way, and his right hand dropped slowly down below his knee.

Alf Todd came on. He came jauntily and in the manner of one moving to a feast or festival. This was the end of a perfect day, and he knew it. He eyed Battling Billson as if the latter had been a pot of beer. But for the fact that he came of a restrained and unemotional race, he would doubtless have burst into song. He shot out his left and it landed on Mr. Billson's nose. Nothing happened. He drew back his right and poised it almost lovingly for a moment. It was during this moment that Battling Billson came to life.

To Alf Todd it must have seemed like a resurrection. For the last two minutes he had been testing in every way known to science his theory that this man before him no longer possessed the shadow of a punch, and the theory had seemed proven up to the hilt. Yet here he was now behaving like an unleashed whirlwind. A disquieting experience. The ropes collided with the small of Alf Todd's back. Something else collided with his chin. He endeavoured to withdraw, but a pulpy glove took him on the odd fungoid growth which he was accustomed laughingly to call his ear. Another glove impinged upon his jaw. And there the matter ended for Alf Todd.

"Battling Billson is the winner," intoned the vicar.

"Wow!" shouted the congregation.

"Whew!" breathed Ukridge in my ear.

It had been a near thing, but the old firm had pulled through at the finish.

UKRIDGE bounded off to the dressing-room to give his Battler a manager's blessing; and presently, the next fight proving something of an anti-climax after all the fevered stress of its predecessor, I left the building and went home. I was smoking a last pipe before going to bed when a violent ring at the front-door bell broke in on my meditations. It was followed by the voice of Ukridge in the hall.

I was a little surprised. I had not been expecting to see Ukridge again to-night. His intention when we parted at the Universal had been to reward Mr. Billson with a bit of supper; and, as the Battler had a coy distaste for the taverns of the West-end, this involved a journey to the far East, where in congenial surroundings the coming champion would drink a good deal of beer and eat more hard-boiled eggs than you would have believed possible. The fact

that the host was now thundering up my stairs seemed to indicate that the feast had fallen through. And the fact that the feast had fallen through suggested that something had gone wrong.

"Give me a drink, old horse," said Ukridge, bursting into the room.

"What on earth's the matter?"

"Nothing, old horse, nothing. I'm a ruined man, that's all."

He leaped feverishly at the decanter and siphon which Bowles had placed upon the table. I watched him with concern. This could be no ordinary tragedy that had changed him thus from the ebullient creature of joy who had left me at the Universal. A thought flashed through my mind that Battling Billson must have been disqualified—to be rejected a moment later, when I remembered that fighters are not disqualified as an after-thought half an hour after the fight. But what else could have brought about this anguish? If ever there was an occasion for solemn rejoicing, now would have seemed to be the time.

"What's the matter?" I asked again.

"Matter? I'll tell you what's the matter," moaned Ukridge. He splashed seltzer into his glass. He reminded me of King Lear. "Do you know how much I get out of that fight to-night? Ten quid! Just ten rotten contemptible sovereigns! That's what's the matter."

"I don't understand."

"The purse was thirty pounds. Twenty for the winner. My share is ten. Ten, I'll trouble you! What in the name of everything infernal is the good of ten quid?"

"But you said Billson told you——"

"Yes, I know I did. Two hundred was what he told me he was to get. And the weak-minded, furtive, underhanded son of Belial didn't explain that he was to get it for losing!"

"Losing?"

"Yes. He was to get it for losing. Some fellows who wanted a chance to do some heavy betting persuaded him to sell the fight."

"But he didn't sell the fight."

"I know that, dammit. That's the whole trouble. And do you know why he didn't? I'll tell you. Just as he was all ready to let himself be knocked out in that fifth round, the other bloke happened to tread on his ingrowing toe-nail, and that made him so mad that he forgot about everything else and sailed in and hammered the stuffing out of him. I ask you, laddie! I appeal to you as a reasonable man. Have you ever in your life heard of such a footling, idiotic, woollen-headed proceeding? Throwing away a fortune, an absolute dashed fortune, purely to gratify a momentary whim! Hurling away wealth beyond the dreams of avarice simply because a bloke stamped on his ingrowing toe-nail. His ingrowing toe-nail!" Ukridge laughed raspingly. "What right has a boxer to *have* an ingrowing toe-nail? And if he has an ingrowing toe-nail, surely—my gosh!—he can stand a little trifling discomfort for half a minute. The fact of the matter is, old horse, boxers aren't what they were. Degenerate, laddie, absolutely degenerate. No heart. No courage. No self-respect. No vision. The old bulldog breed has disappeared entirely."

And with a moody nod Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge passed out into the night.

(Another P. G. Wodehouse story next month.)

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 122.
(The Second of the Series.)

THEY rhyme: inserted in a gun,
Two, with good aim, will slaughter *one*.

1. A sudden fright a crowd will seize.
2. Republic in the Pyrenees.
3. Machine most grateful in the heat.
4. By nature sour, by art made sweet.
5. A wandering pirate on the main.
6. Ancient inhabitants of Spain.
7. One out of place in learning's halls.
8. From labour to refreshment calls.
9. A synonym for captivate
   Is written oft on door or gate.

KING COLE.

Answers to Acrostic No. 122 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on September 11th.

To every light one alternative answer may be sent; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 121.

FROM Europe to the States the way is plain;
The other way will bring us back again.

1. Pencil or pen will do what sounds correct.
2. Within this isle a weight you may detect.
3. Two make fourteen, and six are forty-two.
4. Hill split in twain, or rapid stream we view.
5. 'Tis wielded by the batsman, word of woe.
6. As I am writing, continent I show.
7. Gentle at times, yourself, a book may be.
8. Ending with rope, reverse of harmony. PAX.

1. W	r i t	E
2. E	l b	A
3. S	e v e n	S
4. T	o r r e n	T
5. W	i l l o	W
6. A	s i	A
7. R	e a d e	R
8. D	i s c o r	D

NOTE.—Light 4. Two words, or one.

Solvers who write to the Acrostic Editor and desire answers to their queries should, with their letters, enclose a stamped addressed envelope, and he will endeavour to reply.

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—6.

A YOUNG MAN'S KISS

BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

MISS ANN LANCASTER looked up from her task of arranging a little pile of letters upon the desk. She was carrying a newspaper in her hand.

"Do you mind looking at this newspaper?" she said, addressing Daniel Rocke. "There seems to be rather a curious disappearance reported. I will wait while you read it, if I may."

Daniel pointed to a chair and nodded. Then he bent over the newspaper and read the paragraph which she had marked.

MYSTERIOUS DISAPPEARANCE
of a
SOMERSETSHIRE GENTLEMAN.

A most extraordinary case of disappearance, in which the aid of Scotland Yard has been invoked by the local police, is reported from South Fawley, a small village on the boundaries of Somerset and Devon. It appears that at about five o'clock on Thursday afternoon, Mr. Gerald Oakes, of South Fawley Hall, left home with the intention of shooting a few rabbits on the confines of the park. He was seen to leave the gun-room, cross a paddock, and enter a small wood through which a foot-path leads to the village. Two shots were heard, and a recently killed rabbit was subsequently picked up in the wood. At seven o'clock, as Mr. Oakes had not returned, one of the gamekeepers went to look for him. Later on a search party was instituted and the farther woods and all possible places where an accident could have occurred were thoroughly explored, but without result. The local police have come to the end of their resources, and a representative from Scotland Yard is now upon the spot. Mr. Oakes has only lately succeeded to the property and is a young man of considerable wealth and a well-known athlete. He is of cheerful disposition, exceedingly popular, and there is not the slightest cause to suspect that he is in trouble of any sort. Only a few minutes before leaving the house he instructed his butler to telephone to some neighbours, asking them to dine that evening. Loss of memory seems to be the only possible explanation for his absence, but how he could have disappeared on the verge of the village where he was born and bred is entirely inexplicable.

Daniel finished the paragraph and leaned back in his chair. Ann came over and stood by his side.

"Not much use to us, I am afraid," she remarked.

"On the face of it, no," he admitted.

She waited patiently, as she had learnt to do. There was a reserve in his manner which indicated reflection.

"I fear," he continued at last, a little irritably, "that I am losing my memory—breaking up all round, in fact. I have seen the name of that village, South Fawley, somewhere, within the last twenty-four hours."

Copyright, 1923, by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

"Probably in connection with this affair," she suggested.

"No," he snapped.

"Yesterday," she reminded him, "you had Professor Moon in to see you. You left early for lunch to keep an appointment with Sir Francis at Whitehall House. You were late back—you must have called at one of the second-hand bookshops, for you were carrying that volume of De Quincey you showed me——"

"Stop!" he interrupted. "You have solved the mystery. It was an address label in the bookshop. I saw it on the top of a pile of volumes. Put on your hat, Miss Lancaster, at once."

She obeyed promptly.

They left the office together, walked up Shaftesbury Avenue to the Charing Cross Road, and entered the bookshop at the corner. A little pile of volumes stood in front of one of the shelves, covered by a sheet of brown paper. The addressed label was still there. They both bent over it.

The Rev. Gordon Maseley,
The Vicarage,
South Fawley,
Somerset.

"A clergyman," Ann exclaimed, some disappointment in her tone. "The vicar of the place, I suppose."

"Let us see what his taste in books is, anyhow," Daniel remarked.

He lifted the edge of the brown paper and glanced, carelessly at first and then eagerly, at the little row of volumes. He stood transfixed. The manager of the shop strolled over to him.

"Queer hobby for a clergyman, Mr. Rocke," the latter observed. "This Mr. Maseley sent me thirty pounds and gave me a list of standard modern works on lunacy he wished sent down to him. I am just waiting for Hobson's 'Diseases of the Brain' to send the parcel off. I expect it to-day."

"Is this gentleman, Mr. Maseley, an old customer?" Daniel inquired, turning over one of the volumes.

"I never heard of him before," the manager admitted. "I dare say he has bought books in the shop. He must have done, I should say, or he couldn't have known that the collection of any sort of medical or scientific books is rather a hobby of mine. Does he happen to be a friend of yours, sir?"

"I could tell if I saw his handwriting," Daniel replied. "Have you his original letter?"

"I am not sure, sir."

The man made his way to the office and reappeared a moment or two later, with a sheet of note-paper in his hand.

"Nothing doing," he announced. "The order came typewritten on a sheet of the vicarage notepaper, and in the third person—'The Rev. Maseley, etc.' I should think these country clergymen in quiet places would sometimes go nearly out of their minds without a hobby."

Daniel nodded, a little grimly.

"The Rev. Maseley's hobby," he remarked, "appears to be rather an unusual one."

Ann could scarcely wait until they got back to the office, although Daniel's silence was significant.

"Well?" she demanded, looking round eagerly as soon as she had removed her hat.

"The matter is worth investigating," Daniel pronounced. "Especially——" He hesitated. There were one or two points in the *dossier* of the man whom they sought which he had kept to himself.

"Go on, please," she begged, as she hung up her hat and followed him into his office. "Don't keep me waiting."

"Especially as before he practised surgery he was on the stage for several months, and afterwards appears to have taken orders," Daniel concluded. "He certainly filled a curacy in Melbourne for some short time."

PALE, as one who had passed through a long illness and still lingers between life and death, Gerald Oakes, for whom the police of Somerset and the myrmidons of Scotland Yard were scouring the country, lay on a pallet bed within a few hundred yards of his home, in a long, bare apartment, built as an annexe to the vicarage by a former incumbent of South Fawley, who was more remarkable for his large family than either his parish work or his eloquence in the pulpit. By his side stood Londe, in clerical riding kit of grey. He had just returned from visiting a parishioner at a distant farmhouse and was now engaged in feeling the young man's pulse.

"Quite satisfactory," he pronounced, after a moment's silence. "I must congratulate you, my young friend. You have a marvellous constitution. You are one of my least troublesome subjects."

"Exactly what does that mean?" the young man inquired, weakly.

"It means that you have a constitution like a piece of machinery," Londe explained. "I know exactly by your symptoms how much of my treatment you require to keep you in a certain state of quiescence."

"Confound your treatment!" Gerald Oakes muttered.

Londe smiled.

"It is very unreasonable of you to be

annoyed," he protested. "You must give and take in this world."

The young man stared at him wearily for a moment.

"Are you a madman?" he asked at last. "I suppose you must be, although I can't see how you are able to escape detection in the church and amongst all these country people, if you really are. You seemed all right the night you dined at the Hall. Yet you must be mad. No sane man murders without a motive."

"Not mad," Londe denied, earnestly, "although, alas! I must plead guilty to one slight weakness. Except for that, I think I can safely say that I am one of the cleverest men in this country."

"One slight weakness," the young man repeated, wonderingly.

"Precisely," Londe assented. "A weakness which, with your help and the help of some books I am expecting to-morrow, I hope to be able to cure permanently. I have tried before, but each time I have failed. I have come to the conclusion that there is one slight detail where I make a mistake."

"Detail! My help!" Gerald Oakes groaned. "What use am I, lying here—to anybody? If I could but raise my arm——"

He lifted it feebly. Londe smiled.

"Yes," he said, "I expect you would be dangerous but for the treatment, although, even at my age, I believe that I am a stronger man than you. You would like a couple of glasses of port, wouldn't you, or a pint of champagne?"

"I'd like to get you by the throat and strangle the life out of you," was the shuddering reply.

"You are unreasonable," Londe assured him, earnestly. "Many a man who caught a young fellow like you kissing his wife would have been far more violent than I have been."

Gerald Oakes moved in his place uneasily.

"It was an impulse," he protested. "I don't know what came over me."

"Your vicar's wife!" Londe went on, sternly. "And, according to your story, the first time you had ever spoken to her, except at your own dining-table."

"I shouldn't have spoken to her at all," the young man explained, "but she was frightened at the report of my gun. I didn't see her coming and I shot a rabbit in the path. Afterwards I walked home with her—she asked me in—while we were in the drawing-room——"

"Precisely," Londe interrupted, sarcastically. "Spare me the harrowing details. Then you looked up, and there was I in the doorway."

"Damn you, yes!"

Londe smiled.

"I might have killed you at once," he observed. "As a matter of fact, I am not going to kill you at all."

"If ever I get out of here alive," the young man began, earnestly——

"Now, don't threaten," the other interrupted. "Can't you see for yourself how foolish that is? Besides, you are really an exceedingly fortunate young man. A few months ago I should probably have attempted an experiment on you which would have involved the loss of your life. As it is—well, you will be shooting rabbits again in an evening or so. Let me see."

Londe glanced at his watch and picked up his hat.

"It is time I paid my afternoon call upon your mother," he announced. "You will be glad to know that I go to the Hall every day to talk to her and keep her cheerful. She is bearing up wonderfully, considering—wonderfully. She has made one mistake, however, which has annoyed me very much. She has called in help from Scotland Yard. Such a reflection upon the police of the district!"

"I wish you'd go," Gerald Oakes murmured, peevishly. "I hate the sound of your voice."

"What manners!" Londe sighed. "Your host, too! Well, I shall tear myself away for a little time. I'm going to the Hall now. To-morrow, in all probability, you may be there yourself."

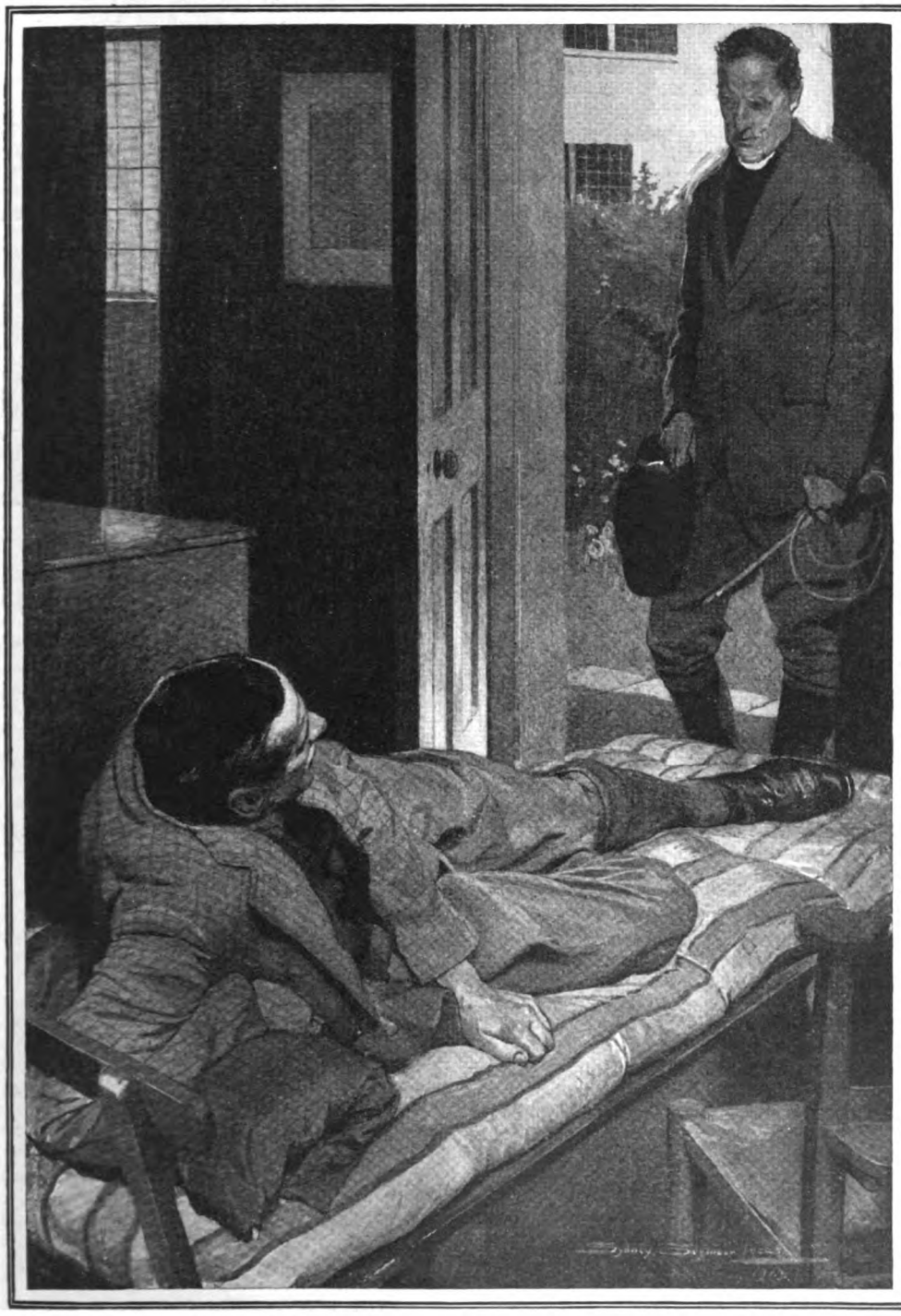
The young man turned on his side and looked curiously at Londe, who stood on the threshold, his broad clerical hat in one hand and his riding-whip in the other.

"If I *am* there, what do you suppose I shall do about you?" he demanded.

Londe smiled.

"I suppose I shall have to take my chance," he admitted. "You will not be too severe, I trust. Remember—that you had your kiss!"

THE young man lay on his couch and watched the sombrely-clad figure swing down the garden path. He was terrified at the confusion of thought into which he had fallen. He could not remember how long he had lain in this hateful apartment, how long since he had eaten or drunk. Everything seemed unsteady and obscure since the one dramatic moment when he had drawn away from the lips of that strange, bewildering woman, thrilled, yet filled with an instinctive apprehension, and had looked up to find her husband standing in the doorway. It had all seemed so natural. Londe's attitude was one of pained and dignified surprise. The young man had felt heartily ashamed of himself. He had



"I wish you'd go," Gerald Oakes murmured, peevishly. "I hate the sound of your voice."

annoyed," he protested. "You must give and take in this world."

The young man stared at him wearily for a moment.

"Are you a madman?" he asked at last. "I suppose you must be, although I can't see how you are able to escape detection in the church and amongst all these country people, if you really are. You seemed all right the night you dined at the Hall. Yet you must be mad. No sane man murders without a motive."

"Not mad," Londe denied, earnestly, "although, alas! I must plead guilty to one slight weakness. Except for that I can safely say that I am one of the finest men in this country."

"One slight weakness," the young man repeated, wonderingly.

"Precisely," Londe continued. "Unfortunately for me, it is a weakness which, with your husband, has become a habit of some long standing. I hope to have tried to break myself of it. I have not succeeded. I have only one slight weakness."

"I [illegible] gross and ungrateful," he seems. He is very jealous."

She smiled at him, but there was none of the gallant left in Gerald Oakes.

"Can't you help me to get out of here?" he pleaded.

She was thoughtful for a moment.

"You need a little more strength," she decided. "Could you drink a glass of wine?"

"Rather!" he assured her, eagerly.

She looked out of the window for a moment. Londe was making his way across the park. Then she left the room and returned almost immediately with a wineglass filled with port.

"Drink this quickly," she invited. "It may give you strength enough to stand up."

He took the glass and drank its contents. For a moment a new life seemed to throb in him, and then blankness returned. He threw up his arms.

"Oh, my God!" he sobbed. "The clouds are coming again!"

He fell back. The woman leaned over him, smoothing his hair, her fingers resting upon his cheeks. His eyes closed, his breathing became regular, although his colour was ghastly. Apparently he slept.

TO Ann, already attired for the journey, the paragraph in the midday edition which she had just bought was a great disappointment. Nevertheless she took the newspaper into Daniel's room and showed it to him.

"I think you ought to see this before we start, Mr. Rocke," she said, with a sigh of regret. "I suppose it's no use going now."

Daniel took the paper from her hand.

"I might have [illegible]line over the paragraph," observed. "A[illegible]inted:—

SOUTH FAWLEY MYSTERY.

Oakes Discovered in Wood here He Disappeared.

Gerald Oakes was discovered early morning by one of his gamekeepers, ed with his back to a tree, and fast leep, within a few yards of the spot from which he disappeared some days ago. His gun was by his side, and, although a little exhausted, his health appears to be unimpaired. He is unable, however, to offer any explanation as to his absence from home and subsequent adventures. He cannot even remember how he found his way back to the scene of his disappearance. The incident is the more surprising inasmuch as there is no hiding-place of any sort in the wood, and the whole neighbourhood for miles around had been scoured for days by the police.

Later.

Our special correspondent, on calling at South Fawley Hall, learns that Mr. Oakes, although in excellent health, is quite unable to account for his disappearance, and was only persuaded with difficulty that four days had elapsed since he had left home. His last conscious recollection is of shooting a rabbit crossing the path, after which he remembers nothing until he was awakened by the gamekeeper four days later.

Daniel Rocke laid down the paper.

"A sell, after all, then," he observed.

"I am afraid so," Ann sighed, thinking regretfully of that long drive into the perfumed Somersetshire lanes. "Shall I send the car away?"

Daniel appeared to be immersed in a brown study. When she repeated her question, however, he shook his head.

"A day or two in the country will do us no harm," he decided. "Besides, I am still a little curious about that clergyman who makes a study of lunacy. Have you got the letter from Sir Francis?"

"It came a few minutes ago," Ann told him.

"Then we'll start."

The butler at South Fawley Hall looked doubtfully at the card and letter which Daniel handed to him on the following afternoon.

"Mr. Oakes is seeing no one, sir," he announced.

"Give him the letter, please," Daniel begged.

"You are not connected with the Press, sir?"

"Not in any way."

The butler took the letter and returned almost immediately. A few minutes later Daniel and Ann were shown into the library and were shaking hands with the hero of the South Fawley mystery. To them he appeared a tall, good-looking young man, with a pleasant expression, at the present moment completely spoilt by a nervous twist of the lips and an uneasy light which shone every now and then in his eyes.

"Sir Francis is an old friend of my father's," he said, as he motioned them to chairs. "Naturally I cannot send you away. At the same time I don't understand your position exactly. You're not a detective, are you—or the young lady?"

Daniel shook his head.

"I am really a Foreign Office expert on ciphers," he confided, "and the young lady is my secretary. When Sir Francis was appointed to his present position, he offered me a post under him, which I have filled for a short time, but only with one object."

"Kind of Home Secret Service business, isn't it?" the young man inquired, listlessly.

"Something of that sort," Daniel acknowledged. "My own interest in it, however, is simply concerned with the pursuit of one man, a dangerous criminal, who is also a lunatic. I was very nearly one of his victims myself."

"I am afraid, if you are connecting him in any way with my little affair, you'll be disappointed," Gerald Oakes remarked. "I may as well tell you at once that I have not been robbed of a penny, directly or indirectly."

"The man of whom I am in search does not commit his crimes for financial reasons," Daniel declared. "However, I do not wish to take up your time. I want to ask you one question. Can you tell me anything about your vicar, the Rev. Gordon Maseley?"

"What, old Maseley?" the other exclaimed, in some surprise. "He's all right. Bit bookish for a country parson, but he's really one of the best when you get to know him."

Daniel felt the shadow of disappointment resting once more upon him. Nevertheless, he persisted.

"How long has he been here?" he inquired.

"Somewhere about fifteen years, I think. Maybe longer. I can scarcely remember the place without him."

"Any family?"

"One daughter, Violet. A very charming young woman. Why this curiosity about the old boy? I shouldn't think there could be a more harmless person breathing, and I'll swear he hasn't a secret in the world. He's scarcely left the place for ten years."

"Would he be likely to be interested in works on lunacy?"

"He's interested in any stuffy old book on any abstruse question," Gerald Oakes declared. "He is one of the real old-fashioned sort, never been out of England, and wouldn't send Violet any farther than Cheltenham for boarding school."

Daniel rose to his feet and held out his hand.

"I came down on a chance," he explained. "I see that I was on a false trail. I shan't worry you with any more questions."

The young man bade them both a courteous but rather tired farewell.

"My respects to Sir Francis," he said. "Tell him, if he wants to know any particulars, that I strolled out as usual at five o'clock to shoot a few rabbits, shot one in the little spinney beyond the park—he knows it—and a moment later seemed to feel everything around me become grey, and afterwards black. And that's all there is to be said."

"One moment," Daniel begged. "You differentiate between twilight and the blackness of total forgetfulness."

The young man nodded. There was some slight interest in his manner.

"Some day," he confided, "I believe I shall remember those first few seconds."

"Was there a woman connected with them?" Daniel ventured.

"I believe there was, but I can't remember her," the young man confessed.

"Anything like Miss Violet Maseley?"

"Not a scrap! Please excuse me now, Mr. Rocke."

DANIEL and Ann drove off in silence.

"So that's that," Ann sighed.

"The Rev. Gordon Maseley seems to be a myth," Daniel admitted. "A man who has lived here for fifteen years and apparently never left the place—well, it knocks our theory on the head."

Near the lodge gates they met an elderly lady who was walking towards the house. She stopped the car somewhat imperiously, by holding out her hand. She was obviously Mrs. Oakes.

"This is Dr. Osborn, I am sure," she said. "You have been up to see my son, haven't you?"

Daniel shook his head.

"I have been to see your son," he acknowledged, "and I am very glad indeed to find him so little the worse for his adventure. I brought him a letter from Sir Francis Worton."

"Really!" she exclaimed. "Sir Francis is a very old friend of ours. . . . . I am

Near the lodge gates they met an elderly lady, who stopped the car somewhat imperiously by holding out her hand.

sorry I stopped you. You see, we were expecting a physician this afternoon, and I took it for granted that you must be he."

"I am very glad to have had an opportunity of seeing your son," Daniel remarked. "His case is a very interesting one."

Mrs. Oakes looked at him curiously.

"If you are a friend of Sir Francis's," she said, "I suppose you are by way of being a detective—or isn't it 'investigator' you call it nowadays? Have you made any discoveries?"

"None whatever," Daniel confessed. "We had just a faint hope that we might have been able to shed some light upon the mystery, but I am afraid that has failed us. May I ask you one question?"

"Certainly."

"Are there any new-comers in the neighbourhood—people of whose antecedents you know nothing, or in whom you might possibly be deceived?"

"Not a soul," was the prompt reply. "With the exception of Mr. Lord and his wife, who are perfectly charming, I have known everyone in this neighbourhood for twenty years."

"Mr. Lord and his wife," Daniel repeated, quickly. "Who are they?"

"The Rev. Mr. Lord is the *locum tenens* for Mr. Gordon Maseley, who has been away for a month," Mrs. Oakes explained. "I have just been to see them off at the station. Very helpful indeed Mr. Lord has been. I don't know how I should have borne up without him."

Daniel felt Ann's clutch at his arm. He sat quite still in the car. The wind was booming across the open spaces in the park, a spatter of rain was falling through the leaves of the trees. The place seemed suddenly unreal—to have an atmosphere of its own. The truth seemed to roar in his ears. Londe had ordered the books in the name of the Rev. Gordon Maseley. Why not? And Gerald Oakes had forgotten.

"You said that you had been to see them off?" Daniel asked, as soon as he could control his voice. "Do you know where they went to?"

"London," Mrs. Oakes replied. "They caught the train at the junction. I understand that they have a small flat in Harley House. I am going to see them next month when I am in town."

Daniel's adieux were a little abruptly made. He called in the village to send off a telegram, and at the inn to collect his luggage. At the latter place the landlady handed him a note.

"This was left for you, sir, by the gentleman who has been doing duty for Mr. Maseley," she explained. "He left it here on his way to the station."

Daniel tore open the envelope.

My dear enemy,

You really lead me a very restless life It is, I suppose, this odious press. A mysterious disappearance would naturally set that mighty brain of yours to work. What a pity, though, that you always wait until you see something interesting in the newspapers! The young man will be quite all right in time, and I am proud of the success of my experiment. I have another one to make before long, which I think will interest you still more. If that succeeds my long quest will be over.

My respects to Gerald Oakes. He is a nice lad, but he shouldn't kiss another man's wife.

Au revoir,

JOSEPH LONDE.

P.S.—I shall leave South Fawley by the five-ten train, and you will, of course, have the usual posse of police and detectives at Waterloo. You are a dear, simple person, but just a trifle obvious, I think.

Daniel handed the note to his companion. He was a little white about the mouth. The strain of many disappointments was beginning to tell upon him. Ann slipped her arm through his.

"Daniel," she pointed out, "don't you realize this—that if he ever reaches his goal, or thinks he has, and recovers his reason, it will be the end of him? He will either commit suicide or give himself up to the police. If he ever does become sane there is a punishment waiting for him greater than any we can inflict."

They heard the train go screaming over the viaduct, miles away. Daniel looked after it, at first gloomily, then almost ferociously.

"If I had the strength of Samson," he muttered, "I would sacrifice the lives of every human being in that train, like Samson did the crowd in the temple. I would pull down the standards of the viaduct and send it hurtling into space. I would watch a hundred people die, Ann, to be sure of that one man."

"I wouldn't," she answered, simply. "I have more reason to hate him than you, and I am content to wait. I can see the signs coming already. Before very long he will be only too anxious to pull down the standards himself. When he begins to feel like that, of what account is our vengeance?"

Daniel said nothing, but the hungry light in his eyes was undimmed.

(Another thrilling story in this series will appear next month.)

THOMAS HARDY, O.M.

Written and Illustrated by

HARRY FURNISS

AUTHOR'S FOREWORD.

Less has been written of Thomas Hardy than of any famous living novelist, yet he is the greatest of them all. He absolutely refuses to be seen or exploited, he is naturally uncommunicative, he is now very old, and lives a secluded life. In allowing me to visit him and sketch him recently, he made an exception, as I have known him so long. Therefore this article and these portraits are particularly interesting and attractive.

THOMAS HARDY is, of all the great men I have met, the most unassuming, the most natural, and the kindliest. It is perhaps due to this charming combination that one finds so many of his portraits adorning the walls at Max Gate, Dorchester, of which the hypercritical might say not one does him justice. A vain man only hangs idealized portraits of himself. But the great novelist and poet evidently thinks more of the painter than of himself. The most recent is a very pleasant portrait by that genial veteran Royal Academician, W. R. Ouless, which hangs in the dining-room. It is a three-quarter view of the novelist and a typical painting by the Jersey artist. Then on the staircase there hangs a full-face portrait of Hardy by Herkomer, painted in that versatile Bavarian's vigorous style—but it is not Thomas Hardy. A smaller and somewhat sombre portrait with eyes looking down hangs in the drawing-room, the work of William Strang. Strang has made many excellent studies of Hardy, but for one reason or other he invariably avoids portraying the eyes of the novelist,. a fact which, to me, is most disappointing, for Hardy's eyes are quite exceptional, and perhaps his most striking characteristic. In fact, when I ventured to point out this peculiarity of the pictures, Hardy confessed that a great friend of his once remarked that, judging from the author's eyes alone, he would have made a splendid detective. By this, I presume, his friend intended to convey that Hardy's eyes are alert, strong, and wonderfully penetrating.

His expression is very mobile, his vision remarkable for quickness and vigour. These characteristics alone render correct portraiture very difficult. Indeed, some of his portraits painted by relatives, as he himself hinted, depicted a certain peculiar but fleeting expression familiar to intimates, but very baffling to others less well acquainted with him.

This information made me realize that my task of drawing the author would be anything but an easy one, particularly as the great author is now of an age when expression becomes—far more than the features—the basis for true portraiture.

I spent a happy time at Max Gate, Dorchester, for the purpose of making portrait studies of Thomas Hardy. For I was in no sense there to interview him. In presenting these studies I must, necessarily, accompany them with some brief description—which I trust will be received as mere enlargements of my portraiture and be read only in that connection.

One of these studies represents the author at work. I cannot label it "Writing another novel," for it is well known that Hardy has no intention of so doing. He feels with Thackeray that "A man over fifty cannot possibly take an interest in young people's love affairs."

As I flung aside one rapid sketch after another, my sitter asked me if it was my custom to insure my work whilst in progress. "For myself," Mr. Hardy said, "I believed there was great danger in keeping my manuscripts of which I had no copy. I made an invariable rule to rid myself of the responsibility. As soon as it was possible I posted off my manuscript, and until then I never felt happy. Afterwards I made it a habit to copy all my MSS. in a letter-

copying press, and later still I had all my work copied by a typewriter."

For a man over eighty, Mr. Hardy's calligraphy is wonderful. Indeed, it would be remarkable among most of our modern writers; it is clear and as firm as any young man's. Judging from my experience of the writing of literary men—and there is no deeper sinner against the art of calligraphy than the author—I am inclined to the belief that typewriting has given the final blow to good penmanship. If an author dictates, his writing invariably deteriorates, but it is far worse if he is in the habit of using a typewriter—he seems to lose all pleasure in wielding the pen.

Hardy evidently enjoys the actual exercise of writing—whence his marvellously written correspondence. Now that he is only concerned with poetry he truly remarked that one cannot type poems (even if so inclined). "It is impossible," he declared emphatically. "One must write poems with one's own hand." And thus I sketched him.

There is perhaps nothing more characteristic of a man than his smile. It is an index to his mentality. Take at random one of our celebrities known to all my readers, Lloyd George, who has been more snapshotted of recent years than any other public man, and in nearly every case smiling. One there easily detects the smile of the man of affairs. Sir William Harcourt had a condescending smile, Lord Charles Beresford an impudent, jolly Jack Tar smile, Bonar Law has a sad smile, indicative of modesty, and so on.

One might go on pursuing the theme. Thomas Hardy has a genuine, sincere smile

THOMAS HARDY TO-DAY.

which is delightfully fascinating. His keen sense of humour is at once evident. His keen eyes flash instantaneously with his smile. Now Lloyd George and others invariably close their lids entirely when they smile; not so Thomas Hardy. His eyes illuminate his smiling expression, an expression which is quite foreign to the man of affairs and certainly impossible in the case of the thinker who is said to be by nature a pessimist.

Many readers of Hardy, even his greatest admirers, accuse him of being a confirmed pessimist, and point to that as the one blot on his literary greatness. Certainly an artist could with a few touches transform the genial face of Hardy into that of a pessimist by closing the marked horizontal lines in the forehead (the lines of "the thinker") and exaggerating the strong lines from the top of the nostrils to the sides of the mouth, and converging the corners of the mouth downwards—as I have done here. In picturing one of his characters he writes: "He was a pessimist in so far as that character applies to a man who looks at the worst contingencies as well as the best in the human condition."

Hardy has the ears of a musician—large, well-formed, and rounded. It is, of course, evident from his books that he is a keen lover of music.

Hanging on the walls of his study is a fine old violin, and against the wall, close by, his violoncello. Stringed instruments would naturally be found there, for who does not recollect the eldest Dewy's defence (in "Under the Greenwood Tree"), that microscopic study of village life which Hardy calls "a rural painting of the Dutch School"?

"They should ha' stuck to strings. Your brass man is brass—well and good; your reed man is reed—well and good; your percussion man is percussion—good again. But I don't care who hears me say it, nothing will speak to your heart wi' the sweetness of the man of strings."

I have met from time to time most of our greatest writers (Thackeray and Dickens were before my time), and I may justly say that I have never known one of them, young or old, who gave such interest and pleasure as Hardy—simply to watch him as one does a character in a play. Watch him pottering about his garden or feeding his dog, or on his knees searching for a book on the bottom shelf in his study. I had glimpses, but I wanted more, of this lovable character, this aged youth with the wonderful head, this analytical, innocent-looking, monumental-minded, absolutely natural, unorthodox, retiring country gentleman.

It requires the pen of a Hardy and his power of character-drawing to describe him properly. The artist's pencil is not equal to presenting the man as he truly is. For it is not the figure—neither the huge unwieldy form of a Thackeray, nor the irrepressible volubility of a Dickens, nor the uncouth Bohemianism of a Carlyle—which lends aid to an artistic outward representation of the man, but, as with Barrie, it is Hardy's head which is his most arresting feature.

First impressions, we are told, are always best; they certainly are the most lasting—which to an artist bent on faithful portraiture are often a snare and delusion. For instance, when I first met Hardy, many years ago, he wore a beard; though he now tells me he wore it only for three years and merely grew it as a protection after a serious illness. But so I always recall him, for I happen then to have seen him many times—and rarely since.

It has more than once been said of Hardy that he confined nearly all his novels to the environment of his native county, Dorset, because of his ignorance of London, when, as a matter of fact, he knew and loved his London thoroughly. He lived in London, as a young man, for over seven years. He came to London in 1862 as assistant to that eminent architect, Sir Arthur Blomfield, whose offices were situated in Adelphi Terrace, off the Strand, one of the most interesting spots both historically and architecturally in all London. It was built by the brothers Adam, called by Garrick "the dear Adelphi Brothers," and was renowned for its beautiful fireplaces and ceilings, some of which were reputed to be

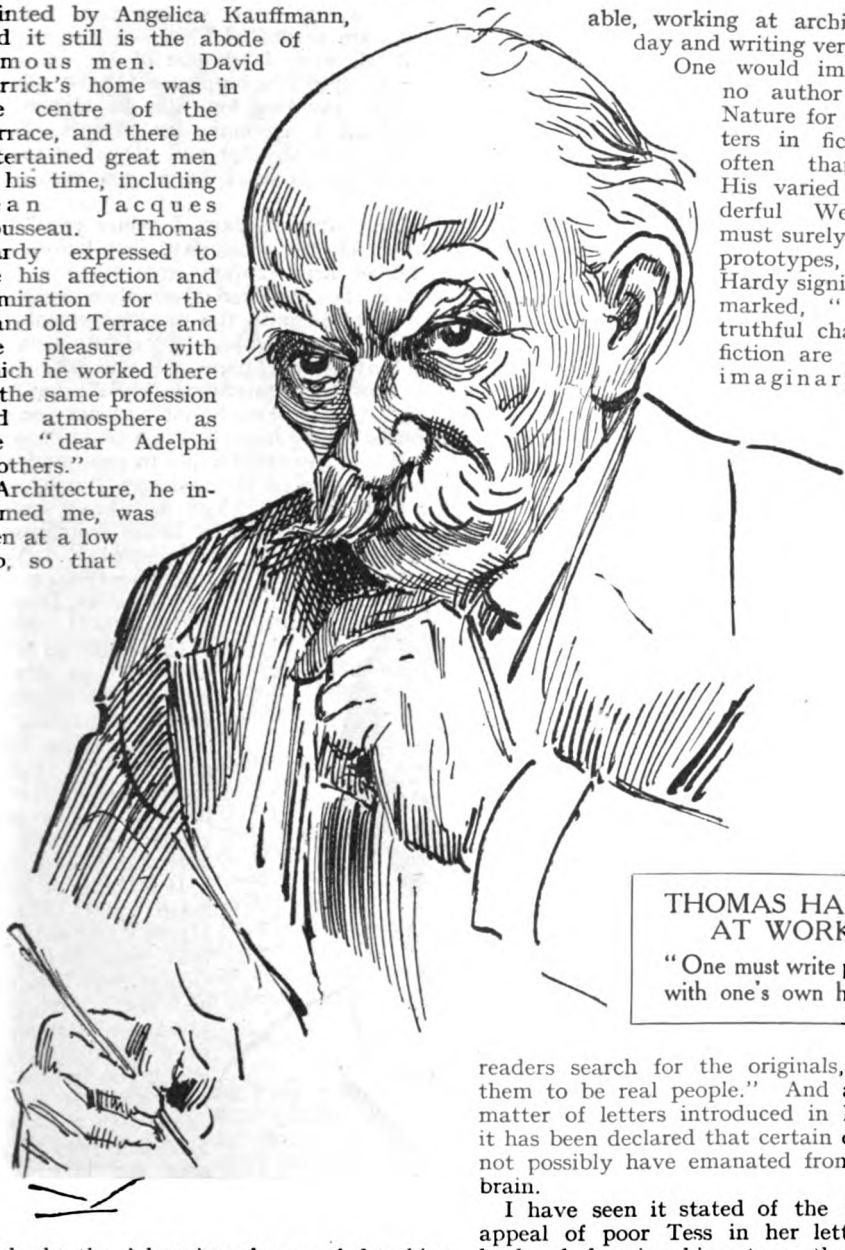
The genial face of Hardy transformed into that of a pessimist, as described by the Author on this page.

painted by Angelica Kauffmann, and it still is the abode of famous men. David Garrick's home was in the centre of the Terrace, and there he entertained great men of his time, including Jean Jacques Rousseau. Thomas Hardy expressed to me his affection and admiration for the grand old Terrace and the pleasure with which he worked there in the same profession and atmosphere as the "dear Adelphi Brothers."

Architecture, he informed me, was then at a low ebb, so that no doubt the Adams' work appealed to him with all the force of contrast. Had he remained an architect, there is little doubt he would have become a famous one, for he showed early promise.

I recollect Hardy's amused smile when I happened to mention the popular fallacy that he was unacquainted with life in London. It may be correct as regards the present day, but Dickens could not have studied it more closely than Hardy did, and at the time when young and impressionable, working at architecture all day and writing verse at night.

One would imagine that no author went to Nature for his characters in fiction more often than Hardy. His varied and wonderful Wessex folk must surely have their prototypes, but, as Hardy significantly remarked, "The most truthful characters in fiction are the purely imaginary, though readers search for the originals, believing them to be real people." And as for the matter of letters introduced in his books, it has been declared that certain ones could not possibly have emanated from a man's brain.



THOMAS HARDY AT WORK.
"One must write poems with one's own hand."

I have seen it stated of the passionate appeal of poor Tess in her letter to her husband, begging his return, that no man could possibly have invented such a letter. It must have been written by a woman. Mr. Hardy smiled when I recalled this flattering, if left-handed, opinion, and said that the letter was written during his ordinary morning's work. So much for the powers of an ordinary critic's penetration.

Not infrequently an author gets an idea from accidental conversation in everyday life; for instance, a certain wonderfully tragic incident in "The Dynasts" was

told to Hardy by a very old Swiss lady, who had the actual scene—a reminiscence of the awful retreat from Moscow—described to her by an old soldier—one of Napoleon's famous warriors.

As in the case of Tennyson, Kipling, and other literary celebrities, Hardy hero-worship would, if tolerated, become unbearable. Freshwater in the Isle of Wight, in the Poet Laureate's time, was protected from the inquisitive public, and in the present day, Burwash, Sussex, the home of Kipling, and Max Gate, Dorchester, where Hardy resides in peace, are withdrawn from public highways and are far from the madding crowd. And all are closed gates to the peculiar people who try to invade the privacy of celebrities. This hero-worship is a purely modern disease. When discussing the subject with Hardy, he mentioned the fact that in his youth such a thing did not exist. He, himself the most observant of men, lived in London in close proximity to two famous giants in literature, but never for one moment troubled his head about either. He lunched frequently at a well-known restaurant close to Hungerford Market, presided over by a celebrated foreigner, to which many celebrated writers, including Thackeray, were in the habit of going. But they did not rouse his curiosity. The annual invasion of Americans has quite transformed the successful writer's home life. He is looked upon as fair game for the globe-trotters, and has to be carefully shielded from importunity. Otherwise the victim's life is unbearable. Apropos of Thomas Hardy, when lunching at an hotel at Dorchester I was informed of a very typical incident that had taken place in the coffee-room in which I was seated. A batch of Americans, while having lunch, were examining the contents of their guide-books and asking the manager searching questions about the "domicile of Thomas Hardy."

"It was," he said, "about a mile away; but Mr. Hardy," he added, "is not at home at present, and even if he were, it would be absolutely impossible to see him, for no visitors are permitted."

"Waal, now, I am one of Mr. Hardy's vury greatest worshippers. I have all his books in my bag for him to autograph. Now keant I just make the exception, and see the great novelist and poet, just to say when I get home I have seen the great man?"

"Impossible, madam, I assure you."

At lunch the next day, just before the American hero-hunters were leaving Dorchester, they declared themselves delighted with the place and the picturesque villages sprinkled about the beautiful Hardy country, but they deeply regretted that the chief object of their pilgrimage should be frustrated. To see Dorchester and not see Mr. Thomas Hardy himself was a cruel blow.

"If it is any satisfaction to you, madam," quietly remarked the manager, "your wish *has* been gratified. You may have noticed a gentleman and two ladies lunching at the next table to you yesterday. Well, that gentleman was Mr. Thomas Hardy."

"Satisfied! Wuzz! Is that really so? And why did you not tell me? You Britishers are a vexatious, uncommunicative lot, I guess! That darned secrecy could never happen in our great country!" And the lady was about right.

A portrait of Thomas Hardy in middle age.

It is common knowledge that Thomas Hardy's first story fell into the hands of George Meredith, who, at the time, was literary adviser to the firm of publishers to which Hardy had sent the MS. It was a story with a purpose. Meredith read it and sent for Hardy and advised him not to print it, but write another with more plot; so the manuscript was never published. The title of it was "The Poor Man and the Lady."

Now I could write a volume about Thomas Hardy, but as he would object if too much were written about him, it would never be published. I might call it "The Poet and the Lady," for I should then have much to say of the very charming and accomplished lady of Max Gate—Mrs. Thomas Hardy.

"HAY QUE CAMBIAR"
(ALL CHANGE)

by

ROLAND PERTWEE

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOHN CAMPBELL

THEY came to the arrangement on the small paddle-boat that plies the ferry trade across the strip of blue water which separates Gibraltar from Algeciras. The idea came from Dennis—it had been pickling in his youthful mind for forty-eight hours, but he waited until the last moment before proposing it. Independence being a first symptom of character, his father, after the mildest protest, gave his consent.

"I only thought," the boy had said, "that there'd be more to it if I were on my own. You see, originally I was going to do the whole journey from England alone and meet you at Seville. It's just the fluke of having broken up a week sooner than I expected made us travel together at all."

"Do I understand," John Stayton replied, with an effort to impart irony into a voice thrilling with pride—"do I understand you found my company on the P. and O. irksome?"

"I say, shut up; you know I was keen as blazes to have you."

"And yet," said John, with infinite sadness, "you now propose to conduct a night journey across half the South of Spain entirely alone. You sever all relations—and even refuse to occupy the berth which I have bought for you, at great expense, in a *wagon-lit*."

"It's the experience," said the boy; "besides, I told some of the fellows I was going out alone—and it will look pretty mouldy if I have to confess I was piloted all the way. You see that, don't you?"

His father nodded.

"I suppose I shall have to see it, but I can't pretend to see why you were such an ass as to let me waste my substance buying a sleeping berth that you don't intend to use."

"Oh, well, you can afford it, dad," was the encouraging reply. "Besides, I fancied you were a bit down this morning and might not take to the idea if I launched it unexpectedly."

"Was I a bit down?"

"Seemed so."

Stayton looked at his sixteen-year-old son and nodded.

"True enough," he admitted. "I was. It was an—an association of ideas, old fellow." He stopped and bit his thumb-nail reflectively, and his eyes, which had a far-away look, strayed across the narrowing strip of water to the gardens of the Reina Christina Hotel. "An association of ideas, that's all." He shook himself out of his reverie. "Then we part on the landing-stage, eh?"

"And meet again at Seville."

"You'll let me look after the luggage?"

"Your own. I shall stick to my bag, of course."

Stayton humped his shoulders.

"You can't speak a word of Spanish," he said. "If you make a hash of things pull the alarm cord, or shout, or something. I shall sleep with an ear open."

"Shut up," said Dennis.

And in the best of good humours his father replied:—

"Shut up yourself."

Dennis Stayton made the most of his five feet three inches as he marched down the landing-stage. He was British to the core, and he meant those Dago porters to know it—further, he meant them to understand he was not a fellow to be jollied by any means. He used some language considerably ahead of his years, and even offered violence to a youth who laughed at him. Great it was to enter the Customs House, if so mean a shack may pass under so influential a title, and have one's luggage searched for tobacco. Dennis adopted an

Copyright, 1923, by Roland Pertwee.

air of nonchalance throughout this episode as though he were the leader of a band of smugglers who, under the noses of the authorities, were flooding the South of Spain with contraband cigars. He experienced one or two extra heart-beats as to what should befall him if the tin of fifty State Express cigarettes, which he had secretly purchased in Gibraltar and concealed in the toe of one of his shoes, should be disclosed. Also, he prayed very hard that none of the Customs officers would go through his pockets, since such a proceeding would result in the inevitable discovery of a small Belgian-made Deringer pistol—acquired by barter at school and packed low over his right hip. However, the ordeal passed off without disaster; and with an hour to spare before the train was due to start, carrying his bag for safety's sake, Dennis Stayton sallied forth to explore the town of Algeciras.

And John Stayton, discreetly hidden behind a pyramid of cork bales, proudly watched the retreating figure of his son and decided in his own mind that he "would do," and wondered in his own mind what the boy's mother would have thought of him if she hadn't taken it into her adorably pretty head to run away with another man when Dennis was only five years old.

John Stayton spent the hour of waiting in the gardens of the Reina Christina. He sat on a bench under an avenue of orange and eucalyptus trees, and the nightingales, who, in the South of Spain, sing by day as well as by night, sang to him—even as they had used to sing seventeen years before, when, on their honeymoon, he and Phyllida had sat side by side on that same old bench. And memories came crowding back to him—and every memory was kind. Pain and resentment were dead. He remembered how pretty she was—how gentle—how soft. He remembered the whiteness of her hands and the angry lower lip of hers. The flash of waywardness in her eyes and the little frown that appeared at the slightest failure on his part to appreciate instantly the shades of sweetness—the changes of clothing or mood which, for his delight, she never tired of affecting. A little kaleidoscope of a woman might have described her, save that the bits of coloured glass were first-water jewels. She lived in a spirit of change—ever appearing and reappearing in a succession of exquisite differences. She would change her frock half-a-dozen times a day—the manner of dressing her hair—the loving names she invented to call him. She could no more stand still than a reflection of light upon water. A dancing nature, and all for him. A girl with a thousand facets cut and polished for his delight—just his.

Men get callous—careless. Matrimony does that for a man—blunts the edge of his appreciation—stales it with familiarity—drives him to put his feet up when he should be holding out his arms. So as she changed her frock she changed her man. Inevitable sequence, since she could not grow wise as he grew calm. Wisdom is an unpunctual visitor, who ever arrives a year too late and appears on the doorstep in a misfit cloak, borrowed from conscience. Sweet Phyllida! Only twenty-four when she ran—a mother at nineteen. They married too soon, that was all—his fault as much as hers—wicked to blame her or revile. Dear Phyllida! Judge not.

THE short dusk quickened into a starry night.

John Stayton glanced at his watch, rose smartly, broke off a sprig of orange-blossom, and strode away to the station. And since he was sometimes rather better than his word, he entered his section of the *wagon-lit* and drew down the window blinds without even a peep among the passengers to assure himself that his son was on the train.

As a matter of fact Dennis was already safely ensconced in a corner seat, rejoicing at having the carriage to himself. To present an air of congestion he employed the device of putting his bag in one corner, his stick in another, and his hat in the one remaining. He might have saved himself the trouble, for there is no great competition among Spaniards to travel first class. They prefer to spend their pesetas in the unpleasant practice of attending bull fights. The light which came from a pair of greasy oil lamps in the roof was poor, and made reading difficult. Save for a visit from a tip-seeking Customs officer, who popped a head through the open window and pointed at his bag, no one bothered him. Dennis banished the fellow with a ready coin, and settled down to a thorough enjoyment of his seclusion, coupled with pleasant reflections on the degree of insularity conveyed by his bearing during his walk through the streets of Algeciras.

A moment before the train was due to start the door was opened, and a porter, carrying the hand luggage of a lady in black, made an unwelcome appearance. The lady glanced in, and, observing that the corner seats were taken, turned away, and with a shake of the head said something in Spanish to the porter.

Now Dennis was nothing if not chivalrous. His ruse was intended to discourage the entrance of garrulous and garlic-smelling "foreigners." The lady in black came under neither of these headings. She was

petite, very smart, and even in the indifferent light he could see how pretty she was. There was something a little tragic, too, in the whiteness of her face and the blackness of her perfectly-cut travelling dress. He could not speak Spanish, so he tried his hand at French.

"*Ici*," he said, "*une place ici!*" whipping his hat off the seat as he spoke.

The lady gave him a smile, came in, and nodded to the porter to put her dressing-bag in the rack.

SOMEONE with heavy feet, which clumped on the roof above, dropped in another lamp, which increased the light by half. Came three shrill blasts from the engine and the train began to move. Then Dennis looked across at the lady in black, and she looked at him, and both of them were pleased with the result of the inspection and both of them a trifle puzzled. Since it is obviously discourteous to stare for an indefinite period at attractive foreign ladies to whom one has not been introduced, Dennis lowered his eyes, and for occupation's sake busied himself undoing his brand-new Gladstone bag and taking from within sundry things he had no immediate use for, including a safety razor, the tin of cigarettes, and a recently-acquired first fifteen cap, which he laid prominently on the seat for all the world to see. He could not tell why he acted in this curiously vainglorious manner, save that there stirred within him an unreasonable desire to produce upon his *vis-à-vis* the impression that he was a bit of a success in his humble way. That first fifteen cap was a crown of victory if she had the sense to recognize the fact—which, of course, she wouldn't. Ignorant beasts, foreigners. After a moment he was rather ashamed of himself, and stuck it back in the bag again. Who was this woman, anyhow—but a mere stranger—with a sweet face which in some extraordinary way seemed familiar to him. That, of course, was sheer nonsense, for where would they have met before? Without daring to glance again, he tried to memorize her features and puzzle out of whom they reminded him. There was a mirror opposite in which he could see his own face, and, absurdly enough, the reflection both helped and hindered him. Awfully odd and disconcerting it was—but the impression grew that in some impossible way he knew her. He turned his head sharply, and found her eyes steadily resting upon him. The same fine shade of perplexity which ruckled his brow ruckled hers. A slightly protruding lower lip was common to both of them. Their deep blue eyes, of the same shade, met, and, as it were, fastened each to each.

Then she spoke. Her voice was low—musical—intimate. There was not a vestige of foreign accent.

"You're English, aren't you?"

It was a tremendous surprise.

"Yes, rather. I should hope so."

"I thought you must be."

"I thought you were a Spaniard when I heard you talking to that porter chap."

"I've lived here a good many years," she said. "Ten or twelve years I've lived out here." Her lower lip seemed to shrug its little red shoulders.

"Have you, though?" said Dennis, compassionately. "Pretty mouldy, I should think. It's all right for a spell, but ten or twelve years!"

"Yes, I know," she nodded.

"Still, I dare say you spend a goodish bit of time at home."

She shook her head.

"No; I haven't been home."

He was going to say more, but she interrupted him with a question—diffidently put, as though the words were unfamiliar.

"Are you—on your 'hols'?"

"Hols?" he repeated.

"Holidays, then. I thought they called them 'hols.'"

"The kids still do, I believe," he said, "but it's a word no fellow in the lower sixth would dream of using. We speak of it as the Easter Vac, or coming down for the holidays."

She looked a shade hurt.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I ought to have known that. It was stupid of me—very stupid—it's just, I suppose, not having had the chance to—to get to know."

"Good heavens, that's all right," said Dennis. "Words are only a matter of the school one's at. I'm telling you what we say at Kineton. I dare say at places like Eton or Wellington they do call 'em 'hols.' Sort of thing they would do."

"Are you at Kineton?"

"I should hope so."

"It's good to be there?"

"Finest place in England, that's all," came the modest assurance, after which Dennis lit a cigarette and relapsed into an impressive silence.

"Talk some more to me," pleaded the lady in black. "I love to hear you talk—please say some more." Her sincerity was obvious—he never for a moment doubted it.

"What shall I talk about?"

"Oh, anything—just go on. Tell me about that cap you took from your bag just now—the one with the gold tassel. It was a nice-looking cap. I'd like to see you put it on."

He put it on, glad of the chance, and she nodded approvingly.

"You look awfully nice in it. Awfully. Do all the boys—fellows, I mean—at Kineton wear that cap?"

Dennis gasped.

"Good Lord! It's a first fifteen. Surely you knew that?"

"I didn't," she stammered, quickly. "I didn't. I ought to have known. First fifteen, that's football. Oh, it was beastly of me not to have known." And two absurd tears sprang to her eyes and toppled over the lower lids.

"I say," exclaimed the boy, "you're crying."

"Yes, I'm crying, but never mind. Make a joke or something, then I'll laugh. I'd laugh easily if you made a joke. I don't want to cry because it makes my nose red and shiny."

"You've got the most ripping nose," said Dennis, with unexpected candour.

"I'm glad you approve," she said, with a sniff, and dabbed it with a small square of georgette.

"I think you're ripping altogether," he added, "and I'm frightfully sorry I said anything to upset you."

She smiled forgiveness at him. The smile popped out and rippled at the corners of her eyes and mouth as though it had been in captivity for ages and was joying in a new-found freedom.

"It wasn't your fault," she said; "it was mine, because if—if I hadn't been so utterly selfish and senseless I should have known all those lovely things by now." She became thoughtful; then, after a moment, went on. "It's queer why people won't trust the future, isn't it?"

Dennis was out of his depth. He wanted to be sympathetic, but was uncertain of the soundings.

"I thought perhaps—you being in mourning—you were crying because you were a widow."

"I am a widow, but I wasn't crying for that," she said. "Besides, I've been in mourning for two years. Spanish women stay in black pretty well for ever."

"But you're not a Spanish woman."

"All one," she said, with a shrug. "Black's as good as anything else, and I don't care what I put on."

"Well, I don't know," said Dennis, doubtfully; "don't pretend to be a judge, but I will say that dress of yours strikes me as being a nailer."

It was good to see how she warmed before his clumsy appreciation. It brought colour to her cheeks.

"It isn't bad really—though it looks best when I'm standing up."

"I can't bear women who don't look nice," said the boy. "I mean, of course, they've got to look kind, too."

Somehow he hurt her with that.

"I don't think I am kind," she said, slowly, "or perhaps not in the right way."

"Oh, rot," he replied, cordially. "A fellow always knows by instinct who's kind."

"Does he?"

"Yes, rather."

"Tell me," she asked, after a small interval, "do you say pretty things like that to your own mother?"

He flushed and, turning awkwardly, looked down into the black gorge through which the train was threading its way. Far below a grey river was creaming over rocks.

"Haven't the chance," he said.

HE never intended to say as much, for in the ordinary way he could stick to an exchange of commonplaces with anyone. There was, however, something about this lady in black that drew confidence from him to an extent he had never experienced before. He felt a profound conviction that he could share with her the deepest secrets of his being, without a fear they would be betrayed. Not only that, but he longed to do so. In his sixteen years Dennis had had little enough contact with women. There had been a few nice aunts and cousins, but somehow they didn't enter into his scheme of life, and no single one of them had ever drawn him out of his natural reserve. This stranger with the sweet white, oval face was different. Being with her was like sitting before a fire—talking to her was like talking aloud to oneself. But he hesitated. Cool fingers touched the back of his hand, and a soft voice said:—

"She isn't dead, is she?"

"No," he answered, "no; at least—I suppose I should have heard if she were dead."

"What—what happened, then?" There was a quality of nervousness in the question.

"Oh, I don't know. It was before I could remember much. I was only a kid of four or five. You see, she didn't stop with the guv'nor."

"Oh," said the voice. "Oh, I see—it was like that. Then—I suppose—you hate her, don't you?"

He shook his head.

"It's too long ago to hate anyone—especially someone you can't remember. Besides, the guv'nor wouldn't let me hate her."

"Wouldn't let you?"

"No. That's one of the few things he'd never shift about. It's only a year ago he

He sat beside her and put a nervous hand on her arm, finding it imprisoned quickly with her fingers. "Keep it there," she pleaded. "Be kind and stay beside me, because I'm frightened."

told me the whole story. Queer, how he talked about her, just as if she was the rippingest memory in his whole life."

"Did he, did he? I didn't think men were like that. Go on."

"Why, he even blamed himself—which was awful rot—accused himself of getting stale—or dull—I forget the word. He said—she was the most beautiful treasure a man ever lost possession of. Stuck in my head, that sentence did."

"But you—can you remember nothing about her?"

He shook his head.

"Scarcely anything. Only stupid things—like being very pretty—and cool hands—and some topping scent she always used." He sniffed and gave a little laugh. "It's absolute rot, but you've got some scent on that made me think of that. Just as if one could remember a smell for eleven years. Idiotic."

"Anything else you remember?" she asked.

He wrinkled his forehead.

"A front door shutting," he said. "Someone who was always going out. That sounds pretty stupid too."

"Not stupid—rather sad," she whispered. "I didn't know children were conscious of things like that—little children, I mean."

They were silent for a long while. Then:—

"Why—why did it happen—the break-up?"

"The guv'nor said 'change,' but I'm not quite certain what he was getting at. She was awfully young when they married, only a year or two older than I am now. He was pretty young himself. 'I let go, somehow,' he said, 'missed the bus.' His work kept him pretty busy—late at the office and all that. D'you know what he told me?"

"Well?"

"That half the world's unhappiness is caused by people forgetting to put their hands in front of their mouths when they're yawning. He says the oddest things, the guv'nor does. Here's a bit of advice he gave me. 'When you marry, old chap,' he said, 'which you must, cultivate two intelligences—one for the home and one for the office, for, sure as eggs, if you get 'em mixed up or neglect the one or the other, you'll finish up a bachelor who is sweeping a crossing.'"

"Then he never married again?"

Dennis shook his head.

"No such luck. I wish he had. That's selfish, of course, but at school, with fellows always asking questions, it would have eased things up a bit for me."

"Don't," she said, quickly. "Oh, don't!"

"I suppose it was rather a caddish thing to say, but I don't only mean it in that way. An all-man house is a bit of a stumer, however you look at it. Somehow, one can't ever stand at ease, if you know what I mean."

"Tell me what you mean."

"When one's down—when things have gone wrong, one kind of wants to—to get beside someone and not much care what one says or does—you know, let your feelings go."

"And would a stepmother do?"

"Depends—she might—can't say."

"You are fond of your father?"

"Good Lord—I should think—no one could help being fond of him."

"He sounds nice," she nodded. "Most tremendously nice—like—like the best man I ever knew—oh, ages and ages ago."

THE carriage door on the side away from the window opened, and a startling apparition with a black moustache and an unshaven chin plunged in out of the night.

"Brigands!" cried Dennis, and his right hand flew for the Deringer.

"It's only the ticket inspector," said the lady in black.

In Spain they have odd habits—even in corridor trains the ticket inspector prefers to make his excursion along the running-board. The tickets were examined and punched and the intruder vanished into the void whence he had come.

"By gad! that was topping!" said the boy. "It would have been a pity, though, if I had plugged him."

"Are you out here all alone?" she asked.

He hesitated.

"I'm joining the guv'nor at Seville."

"How beautifully independent!" And she looked at him with admiring eyes. Then, quite unexpectedly, she said the oddest thing.

"Oh, aren't you sorry for that mother of yours and all she's missing now?"

"Eh, what's that?"

"I was wondering what I wouldn't give to be the mother of a boy like you—with a first fifteen cap—a splendid independence—and a pistol in his pocket to shoot brigands with."

"You're laughing at me."

"If you only knew, you wouldn't believe I was laughing at you."

"'Tany rate," said Dennis, "you could hardly expect to have a son as old as me. I'm sixteen, you know, and you can't be much more than twenty something."

"I am much more," she answered. "I could have had a son like you and he would have been sixteen—but I haven't got him—I haven't got him. I haven't—haven't!"

As Dennis came in she was patting her hair in order with a few deft touches.
"Do I look most awfully untidy?" she was asking.

And a white hand flew up and was pressed tightly to the plaintive, angry mouth.

"I say," said Dennis, "whatever's wrong—you seem awfully queer?" He crossed and sat beside her and put a nervous hand on her arm, finding it imprisoned quickly with her fingers.

"Keep it there," she pleaded. "Be kind and stay beside me, because I'm frightened."

"Good heavens, of what?"

"You wouldn't understand—at least you would, too well—but I'm one of the people who've thrown away everything that was worth having—everything—and—and——" Her voice split up like fragments of a broken tumbler. "And I'm child enough to want them back—all of them."

"Want what back?" he asked. "Look here, I like you frightfully—you're the nicest person I've ever met. Tell me, has anyone made you unhappy? I swear if there's anything I can do to help, you've only to say."

"Even if I told you it was—was my fault that I'm miserable, because I was vain, empty, selfish, second-rate?"

"It 'ud be no good your telling me that because I shouldn't swallow it."

"Even if I said I was just as cruel as your own mother was cruel."

"Chuck that," he answered, hotly. "Even from you I won't stand that."

"Oh, you darling," she said, through a bright mist of tears. "You loyal, loyal darling. If you really mean you'd do something for me! Just for a minute help me to believe I've got back the best of what I threw away."

"That's a tall order," said he. "How can I?"

"Put an arm round my neck and kiss me like a son would."

"That's easy," said he. "And, do you know, I've been wanting to."

He gave her a mighty hug and pressed his hot boyish face against her cheek. A faint perfume, pregnant with memories of a half-forgotten past, filled his nostrils. It was so delicious—so comforting—so right, that he left his head lying against her shoulder.

Simply enough she said "Thank you," and passed her cool fingers across his head. They stayed thus for a long while in contented and unbroken silence. Presently she said:—

"Will you tell me your name?"

"Dennis Stayton."

She started violently—shook and went supple in his arms, then tilted sideways against the window glass in a dead faint.

"I say! I say!" he cried. "I say—look here!"

But she might have been dead for all the notice she took of him.

IN a panic, Dennis cast about for restoratives. He laid her along the seat—slapped her hands and fanned her with a newspaper.

Brandy. Brandy was the stuff! Idiot that he was, not to have brought a flask. In desperation he dragged her dressing bag from the rack and tried to open it. It was locked. Written across the hanging label was the name Phyllida Waverley. The dressing bag slipped with a crash to the floor and the boy's eyes opened wide. Phyllida was his mother's name and Waverley the name of the—but that didn't matter, he was dead now, and even when alive, if his father was to be believed, Waverley was a passable fellow—an average man, neither too good nor too bad—the inevitable medium of woman's desire for change—a spoke in the cartwheel of life—such, in fact, as any man, given the same circumstance, might reveal himself to be. Nothing mattered but the supreme discovery of this adorable mother with the dead white face who lay like a corpse upon the seat. In a frenzy of haste, Dennis dashed out into the corridor and beat his fists against the barred communicating door that led to coaches of the *wagon-lit*. There was no answer. He beat again. A head was thrust out of an adjoining compartment and someone cursed him fluently in Spanish.

"Swine," said Dennis, with equal venom, and fled back to his own carriage again. Not a sign of life stirred the motionless figure. Then Dennis opened the off-side door and lowered himself to the running-board as the train, with a shriek, plunged into a sulphurous tunnel.

A rush of cold air and a hand lugging at his arm aroused John Stayton from his sleep.

"Good God!" he said. "What's up?"

Dennis was gasping—blubbering almost.

"Mother—mother's there—she's fainted—mother's there! Oh, don't you understand? It's mother!"

"What the blazes are you drivelling about?"

Dennis, stammering and gasping, made a pitiful mess of the story—but somehow he managed to convey the essentials.

"Mother's there. I kissed her, dad. And, dad, she's lovely—most—— And oh, dad, don't you think you possibly——"

"Here, get into that bed," said John Stayton, lugging a pair of trousers over his pyjama legs. "Get in and go to sleep."

"Yes, but I must show you where."

"Idiot boy," said his father. "D'you

imagine I turned in without finding out where you were ? "

He struggled into an overcoat and dropped a flask in the pocket.

" The door's shut," said Dennis.

" I've got my boots on," came the answer.

In the bright sunlight of the early morning, Dennis Stayton made his way down the corridor. The door was open now, so there was no need to go by the running-board. Sleepy Spaniards were stretching themselves after uneven slumber. The railway embankments glittered with wild flowers, and through the open windows came a delicious smell of orange-blossom from the groves.

His father and mother were looking at one another with something in their eyes that seemed so intimately their own that for the moment Dennis felt almost a wave of jealousy. They seemed to be sitting unnecessarily far apart—but that might have been explained by the fact that Dennis had sung his way down the corridor. They looked, moreover, as though they had only that moment arrived at their present positions. There was an amazing difference in their expressions, as though something which was lost or missing had been replaced. It was absurd that anyone could be so pretty as his mother. As Dennis came in she was patting her hair in order with a few deft touches.

" Do I look most awfully untidy ? " she was asking.

And his father replied :—

" You look—— Hullo, Dennis ! "

A grinding of brakes and the train slowed down in the station at Seville.

" *Hay que cambiar !* " roared the guard. " *Hay que cambiar !* " Which translated implies " All change."

All change ! Without which life is a dull affair of no great account.

CONAN DOYLE'S REMINISCENCES

SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE has written his Reminiscences for publication in "The Strand Magazine." Sir Arthur gives a full account of his early life, of his setting up as a doctor without patients, of his living on a shilling a day, of how he began to write, of his early failures, of the coming of Sherlock Holmes and all his subsequent success.

Sir Arthur has been a great traveller and a lover of almost every sort of sport, while he has, of course, been well acquainted with the most eminent and interesting men of the day. His Reminiscences of George Meredith, Barrie, Lloyd George, Lord Balfour, Rudyard Kipling, Henry Irving, Bernard Shaw, Robert Louis Stevenson, and others make absorbing reading.

In fact, the whole of Sir Arthur's Reminiscences will provide a rich treat for the readers of "The Strand Magazine," in which their publication will commence

IN THE OCTOBER NUMBER.

The Green Bottle

By

MRS. JACQUES FUTRELLE

ILLUSTRATED BY
W. SMITHSON BROADHEAD

I.

FRANKLY I had made up my mind to marry for money—and the man I was going to marry knew it—because I was so tired of getting on with nothing a year, wearing Cousin Mary's cast-off gowns—even if she did live two thousand miles away, and the gowns were hardly worn when they came to me—tired of living with not a roof over mumsey and me except when Fred and Caroline went to Palm Beach. But a millionaire! And to know that he loved me; to call him Billy—well, I haven't ceased yet to wonder at the goodness of God.

I was not sure that mumsey was going to look at it that way, so somehow I put off telling her, and packed her off to an old friend who wanted her company for a month. She needed a change after her illness, and a month would give me a chance to gather courage.

The Wards have been trotting in our set so long, accepted and labelled, that some things should have been forgotten; but there were some things mumsey never would forget—some things she must remember, especially when the question was marriage. I knew she would bring up, and expatiate upon, that old subject of Billy's great-grandfather having sold matches for a living when mine was the blue-blooded Governor of the State; I knew how she would look at me in her dear, patient, resigned way, and say, "Oh, Kit!"

Now, I couldn't have anyone, even my own mother, think that Billy wasn't the most perfect creature on the face of this earth. Mumsey believed in the divine right of kings, and all that sort of thing. Perhaps her point of view was right, but I couldn't bring myself to see that it mattered what Billy's great-grandfather did for a living as long as it was honest. Why, I'd sell matches this instant if it would help to prove my love for Billy—but mumsey wasn't going to look at the matter in that highly romantic light.

I consoled myself with the thought that perhaps the money would in time make her feel resigned to the situation, for she's had an awful struggle ever since my father died; and one simply *has* to love the things that money can buy. Surely the thought of a home, comforts—nay, luxuries—would bury that match business so deep it never, never

could be resurrected. Away down in my heart I regretted the money. I wanted only Billy with our love for each other, and his splendid ambition. I wanted him to need me; I wanted to have to plan and encourage. I wanted to live down that awful resolution I had made about marrying for money.

It began to haunt me—that resolution. Every time I saw Billy I asked him one awfully important question: "Do you think I am marrying you for your money?" The answer always was the same: "No," which he said instantly; and I knew he had not stopped to consider, or think it over, or anything like that; especially when he began to fudge on my question and answered "No" when I had only reached "think." One day I had an inspiration. I flew to the telephone, and when he answered I flung this at him:—

"Let's give away your money, Billy!"

"Oh, let's!" he replied, and tried to kiss me over the telephone; then he murmured: "Kit, darling!" in the tone that always sets my heart pounding.

"Then you never, never could think I married you for it," I rushed on as soon as I could. "Billy, dearest, *are* you really willing?"

"Perfectly," he answered.

I said a lot of extravagant things which tempted him to repeat "perfectly," and we lost quite five minutes before we could get back to the important part of the conversation.

"Then it's settled?" I asked, finally.

"Quite settled," he replied. "When shall I send it up?"

"Oh, you're not to give it to me!" I gasped. "But give it *away*—get rid of it."

"All right; I'll begin with a jeweller. I saw a necklace——"

I moaned a little.

"Won't you be serious?" I begged.

"Yes, dear. Kit, I love you."

My heart began pounding again, and I kissed my ring with tears in my eyes, because I loved him, and—oh, I could have been wildly happy if it hadn't looked as if I were going to marry him for the awful money.

"Not that way, dear," I said, "but get rid of it."

"I've been talking to an automobile man. I'd like to smash convention and send you up a car."

"Oh, please, please don't!" I entreated.

How I blessed the convention that protected me from such a calamity. Great heavens! What would I do with a car? Me, with not a roof over my head except when Fred and Caroline were at Palm Beach!

"A runabout, Kit—one you could drive yourself."

"Then you won't give the money away?"

"Oh, yes. I'll bring you the necklace to-night."

I banged the receiver on the hook, and just sat down and cried. And that necklace was the beginning of all the trouble.

II.

I'M just sick and tired of dinner-parties. I've done every dinner-party of any consequence for five years, and it has just occurred to me that they are exceedingly stupid things. I'm sure the only reason I ever went at all was the necessity for the dinner itself; then I had to make myself indispensable on account of the need of my next dinner, and the next, and so on.

Of course, not by any chance did my hostess ever think of putting me next to Billy, either to right or left, but stuck him a way off down at the other end of the table, where I couldn't even see him without making myself conspicuous. It seemed, too, as if the dinners were twice as long as they once were; that they would never end; that the man next to me was always everything I most disliked in a man; that the ride back home with Billy grew shorter each time. Society is a bore, anyway.

Billy brought me the necklace. Nestling against its black velvet cushion it was the most exquisite thing I have ever seen. It was a rope of diamonds, the clasp seemingly as if one had merely looped the strand, leaving two frazzled ends hanging, the frazzled ends being just so many little diamond strings. Surely there was not another like it in all the world. Suddenly I threw my arms about Billy's neck.

"Billy, dearest, you don't think I'm marrying you for your money?" I demanded.

"Kit, we won't talk about the money any more, if you please," he replied. "Just be a good girl, and promise to marry me very soon."

My arms tightened.

"I love you," I whispered.

"Do you promise?"

I promised.

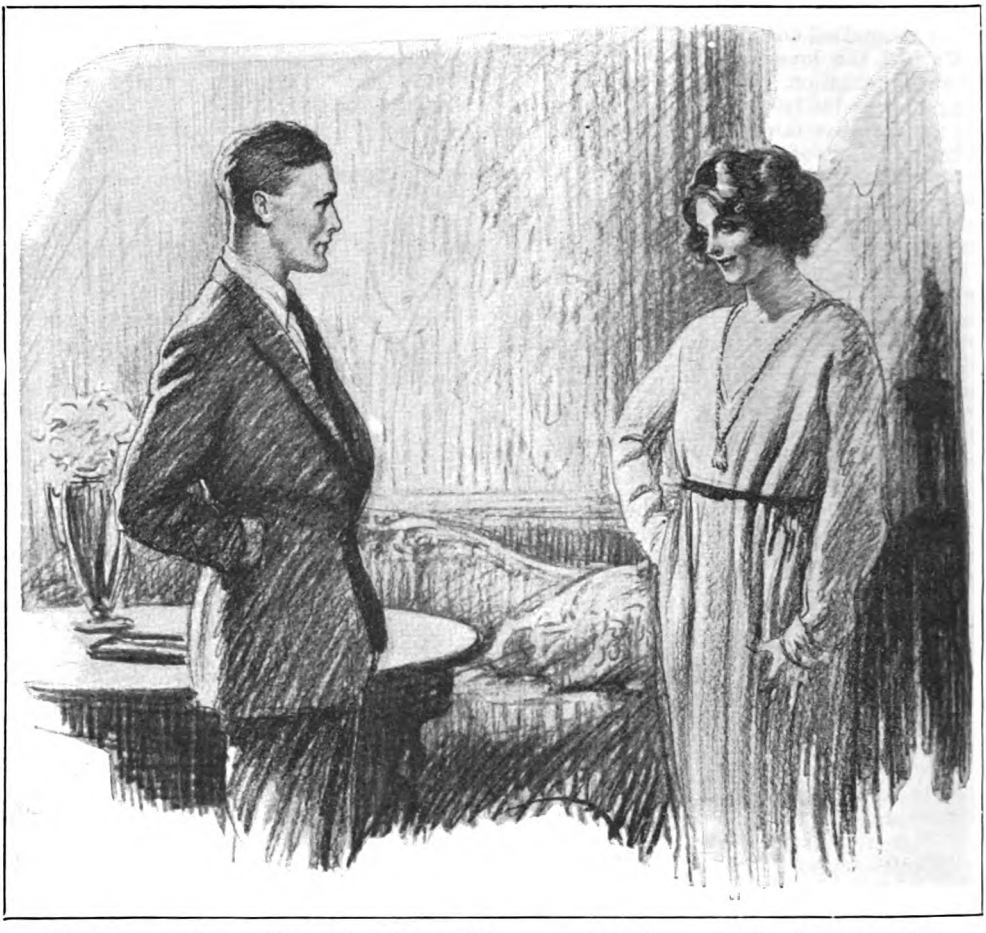
"Very soon?"

"Very soon," I agreed.

Gracious! It would have to be very soon, because I had even ceased to win at auction, my only source of revenue, for always thinking of him instead of the cards.

He fastened the necklace, kissed it, which made it doubly valuable, then I stood at a little distance for him to see the effect.

"Am I too conspicuous?" I asked.



He fastened the necklace, kissed it, which made it doubly valuable, then I stood at a little distance for him to see the effect.

" You know it isn't proper for me to accept such an extravagant gift—yet."

" It's nobody's business but yours and mine."

" And mumsey's," I reminded him. " You see, we—the Callaways—always have been so dreadfully correct, and mumsey has such old-fashioned ideas about girls and what they can accept. I think the limit is flowers."

" Don't tell her."

" Bill ! That's subterfuge."

" Only a technical evasion," he smiled. I shook my head. " We, the new rich, don't have to bother our heads with such things," he went on.

I flew into his arms and held up a reproving finger.

" Don't dare call yourself names ! " I exclaimed. " And what is subterfuge, after all the things I have been guilty of all these years—I, a social parasite ? I shall accept the necklace."

I wore it. What business had such old-fashioned ideas to exist, anyhow ? And someone was sure to think it was paste, or borrowed, so what did it matter ?

The night Billy brought me the necklace Mrs. Van Der Greave had discovered a perfectly authentic French Count to give a dinner for, and get excited about, and give a zip to an otherwise unimportant season. She had decided that I was to be the chosen one to sit at the other side of the Count, because of our mutual blue blood and impoverished pocket-books, while all the time I was wishing some of the girls who wanted that coveted position so badly could have it.

Did you ever dislike a man for no reason on earth except just the feeling that you dislike him ? That's exactly how I felt about

Count Rouessel. He was good-looking enough—too good-looking, if I had been asked to express an opinion; his manners were elegant, and, to me, tiresome; such acme of perfection is death to conversation. He spoke English with an accent that made all the girls within sound of his voice—except myself—go quite mad about him. He had gorgeous eyes, but he had a way of looking so searchingly at one that I could not rid myself of the notion that he was always measuring the strength of an adversary.

He devoted the first five minutes of the dinner to his hostess; he devoted the next fifteen to me. Poor chap! How could he know I hadn't a penny to my name? He had no reason to believe my beautiful necklace was either paste or borrowed. In fact, it rather amused me that once he, after a most elaborate apology, commented on the beauty of it.

The dinner was, perhaps, half over when a most peculiar thing happened. I was feeling perfectly well—I don't believe I ever felt better—when Count Rouessel, having finished explaining a French *bon mot* to Mrs. Van Der Greave, turned to me.

"Are you not ill, mademoiselle?" he exclaimed.

I think I was smiling, but I felt my mouth begin to drop open with astonishment

"You are most pale, mademoiselle," he went on, alarmed. "*Oui, oui, oui, mais oui?*"

I remembered to close my mouth, and tried to raise a hand to my brow. I did feel faint, the table and the lights began to whirl, my hand fell back listlessly into my lap. My throat felt tight.

"Will you accept zis, mademoiselle?" Count Rouessel asked.

He gave me a small green bottle, which, of course, I knew must contain some kind of smelling salts. I took it gratefully, withdrew the heavy glass stopper, and inhaled the contents.

"Ah, you are feeling better, *n'est-ce pas?*"

I managed to smile at him.

"Thank you so much," I murmured.

I turned to Bobby Van Der Greave, who had taken me in.

"Do I look ill?" I asked. "I feel rather queer."

He started to get to his feet, but I pulled him back.

"Don't make a scene, Bobby," I implored. "Count Rouessel has given me some smelling salts. I feel better now."

Bobby assured me that my colour was coming back. His eyes just then happened to fall upon my necklace; I could feel his sudden interest in those jewels, and his astonishment that I possessed it.

"That's a beautiful necklace, Kit," he remarked. "I never saw it before. New?"

"Oh, quite," I answered, flippantly. "Does it look real, or an awful fake?"

"I beg your pardon, Kit," he said, confused, as the red surged into his face. "I didn't mean to—embarrass you."

"Don't bother," I smiled; and, to give him a chance to get rid of the awful mistake look, I turned to give the bottle to the Count.

"Will you do me the honour to retain it, mademoiselle?" Count Rouessel requested. "Mademoiselle is not fully recovered, *n'est-ce pas?*"

I retained the bottle. Later on I slipped it in the lace of my gown, and forgot it completely until I was at home. It might have occurred to me to wonder about that sudden indisposition of mine, but it didn't. I didn't even think of mentioning it to Billy.

That night I planned a hiding-place for my necklace; something of its tremendous actual value came to me. The bottle I left upon my dressing table, little dreaming what an important part it was to play in the drama about to develop.

Next day, while I was on my way to a bridge party, a woman in the train fainted. I had the little bottle of smelling salts in my bag. It helped to revive the fainting woman. Without actually remembering it was not my own, I thrust the bottle upon her as I reached my destination. I hadn't the slightest idea who she was; I only noticed that she wore a brown dress. The incident was so trivial that five minutes later I had forgotten it completely.

III.

I DON'T know much about Continental customs, but I think it's rather unusual for a Count to call informally at ten in the morning on a young woman he had met only once. I couldn't believe it was quite true, but there was the card; I read the name—it was plain enough; and Martha said he was waiting in the drawing-room. I powdered my nose hurriedly, and went in.

Count Rouessel was most polite, most formal—too formal for such an informal visit—and most charming, especially when he spoke of how quickly he had fallen into informal American ways. It didn't take long to disabuse my mind entirely of whatever silly idea I might have had that I—myself, me—had inspired the visit. He had come for the smelling salts.

"I am most unusual, mademoiselle," he said, "but the vinaigrette had most great associations wiz my family. As you say,

one heirloom. Will you do me the honour to return to me the vinaigrette, mademoiselle ? "

And I had not got it ! I had given it to the woman in the train. I didn't know who she was, or where she was now. I tried to speak, to tell him that I had thrust his heirloom upon an utter stranger ; but the words refused to come. I only made some sort of a sound in my throat.

" You are ill, mademoiselle ? " he exclaimed.

I found my voice at last.

" That little green bottle an heirloom ? " was what I said. " Well, I'm awfully sorry to have to say so, but I—I haven't got the bottle."

" *Comment ?* " he almost shrieked.

He understood me clearly enough. Such excitement for such a silly little bottle.

" I gave to you the vinaigrette, mademoiselle, but yes ? " he demanded.

" Oh, yes, you gave me the bottle," I admitted. " But I gave it away."

" *Comment ?* " he shouted at me again.

I didn't bother to repeat it ; what I said was plain enough.

" You have joke wiz me, mademoiselle, *oui, oui, mais oui ?* " His English was getting worse in his excitement.

" Oh, there's no joke about it," I assured him ; and I told him about the woman in the train.

" *Oui, oui, oui,*" he spluttered. " But you know her, mademoiselle, but yes ? "

" No, I don't. I haven't the slightest idea who she is."

It was a dreadful scene. The Count paced the floor excitedly, shouting " *Sapristi !* " and a lot of French I didn't understand ; and I was on the verge of tears, and didn't dare cry, because I'd spoil my nose ; and—oh, it was perfectly terrible. The only thing I could do was to promise to try to get it back ; how, I knew not except to call up Billy and ask him to help me. Good Lord ! How I prayed that Count Rouessel would go and let me get to the telephone.

All things must come to an end. He did go, not believing a single syllable of the train story ; and why he thought I wanted to keep the silly little bottle was more than I could see. I flew to the telephone the moment the door closed upon him, and called Billy. I told him the awful story ; and Billy—well, Billy laughed !

" Don't bother your pretty head with it," he advised. " If it's gone, it's gone."

And that's all I could get out of him.

I'M not sure how I got through the morning, but the afternoon I spent in the street cars, in the trains, in the shops, anywhere, everywhere, seeking a woman in a brown dress. I went home at dark, exhausted, without result. I don't think Billy realized how serious the thing was until he saw me. Of course, he came blazing through with the sensible thing—an advertisement. How I waited, and prayed, and hoped all that next day ! I didn't dare go out for fear the woman in the brown dress would appear with the bottle. I fairly hung upon the telephone. Once I thought of breaking an engagement for the evening to play bridge ; Billy had some kind of a lawyer's affair on, anyhow, so I'd just stay home and cry it out. Then it came to me that the state of my finances forbade such a thing ; I had to go—I had to make an effort to win. I went, and fickle Fate smiled upon me ; I won.

I felt there was something wrong even before I opened the door of the flat. The drawing-room—everywhere !—was one mad jumble. Thieves ! The thought came instantly. Panic-stricken, I thought of my necklace ; I had left it there. I fairly flew to its hiding-place. It was gone !

I'm sure I should have been glad to die. I sat down in the middle of that disordered place and waited for Martha to come. But I could not stand inaction. I set to work to get some order out of the chaos, every now and then going back to where I had hidden the necklace, in desperate hope that I had overlooked it. But gone it was—entirely gone.

I tried to form some idea as to what I should do. Telephone to Billy ? Inform the police ? I couldn't tell Billy ; he'd be sure to think I had been careless. Good Lord ! Suppose he should think, knowing my financial condition, that—my heart stood still at the very thought—I had pawned it !

As I was replacing some garments pulled pell-mell from a chiffonier, my eye caught the gleam of something on the floor. I stooped and picked it up. It was a curiously-shaped locket.

The next day Billy had to go out of town. What a blessed relief it was, his going away until I could get some trace of my necklace ! The Count and his bottle and the woman who had it were entirely lost sight of. Finally I made up my mind to inform the police, and give them the locket I had found ; it might prove a clue to the thieves. I dreaded the notoriety of the affair ; but, to my astonishment, no mention of it came out in the newspapers. So I resolved that Billy should never know.

Suspense is a dreadful thing. I grew haggard in a day. Of course, I couldn't expect the police to find thieves in a minute, but the thought haunted me that they would never find them, that even so my

"You have joke wiz me, mademoiselle?" His English was getting worse in his excitement.

"Oh, there's no joke about it," I assured him.

beautiful necklace might be for ever lost to me. Once during the day I happened to look out of my bedroom window; two men were below looking up. And twice during the day detectives in plain clothes came and inspected the flat.

Toward night the uncanniness of the affair began to get on my nerves. I had a dinner-party on at the Hawtreys'; I had to go, and, in her frightened condition, I could not leave Martha alone in the flat. We securely locked and bolted every door and window, and I took her with me. For the second time, with the eyes of the police upon the place, someone entered, and once again left behind a sadly disordered apartment. But before I was to know of it another scene in the drama, that had resolved into howling melodrama, was destined to be played at the Hawtreys' dinner-party.

IV.

DID you ever stop to think how easy it is to get into society? Especially in a place that is neither too large nor too small? More especially a place that has a reputation for blue blood and exclusiveness? Take my word for it, that's the easiest kind. The recipe is simple. It merely requires one introduction, a mixture of good sense and tact, sprinkled freely with an expensive home, five motor-cars, a goodly number of servants, and the whole highly spiced with good money.

But, frankly, I did not like Mr. and Mrs. Collis.

I dreaded, too, to meet Count Rouessel until I had that hateful little green bottle to return to him. I only hoped he wouldn't splutter at me when he saw me, because how was I to know a little smelling-salts bottle was an heirloom? I was purposely late. I didn't want to listen to any dressing-room conversation about my looks, or answer any questions about the necklace I had worn—I knew there was a lot of curiosity and speculation about it. I didn't want to say that it was paste, or borrowed; I didn't want to affirm or deny anything. And I hoped there was no gossip afloat about the green bottle.

It was after the soup that I began to take note of the persons in my vicinity. I already knew that Billy was not there and that the Count was at the other end of the table. Something in the merry way a woman near me was laughing caused me to look at her. It was Mrs. Collis. Then suddenly the world stood still! About her snow-white neck was a rope of diamonds, the clasp seemingly as if one had merely looped the strand, leaving two frazzled ends hanging, the frazzled ends being just so many little diamond strings.

I sat quite still, and I was quite cool and calculating. I even remember a silly rhyme Bobby Greave was reciting to me across the table. I did not bother my head with why she should wear a stolen necklace in plain sight of everybody of any consequence in town; I only knew that if the necklace had fallen into her hands by accident we would thrash that out afterward. I knew one thing—knew it plainly, and calmly, and with a deadly certainty—that Mrs. Collis was going to hand the necklace over to me after the dinner was at an end, or I should take it!

I was not at all excited when the signal came. I even spoke to Mrs. Collis casually as I asked if I could see her alone in a little room off the conservatory which I knew would be deserted. She looked a bit astonished at such a request, but she came.

I didn't waste time with preliminaries I knew what I wanted, and I proceeded to get it.

"Mrs. Collis, I'll trouble you to return my necklace, if you please," I said, rather sweetly, I thought, considering the circumstances.

Mrs. Collis shot one glance at the door and another at me. Perhaps she was wondering just how she would fare with me in a hand-to-hand fight.

"I don't understand you," she replied fright or astonishment punctuating every word.

"Perhaps not," I condescended. "But the necklace you are wearing was stolen from me two nights ago. I don't know how it came into your possession, but I'll trouble you to give it to me."

She opened her lips, but no words came. One hand flew to the necklace, while her eyes once again sought the doorway.

"I think I'm stronger than you," I said again, very sweetly. "I should dislike to have to take it."

Again her lips parted, but no words came.

"It will naturally cause a scene," I went on, in conversational tone. "And I'm very much afraid will prove to your discredit. May I trouble you again?"

After a moment of hesitation, she reached up and fumbled with the catch; then her hands fell limply to her sides.

"It has a peculiar fastening," I said. "Will you allow me?" I unclasped the necklace, wrapped it in my handkerchief, and slipped it into my bosom. "I thank you very much," I told her, most courteously. "Lovely weather, don't you think?"

I stood aside to allow her to pass. Later I heard someone inquiring for her

"She had a miserable headache," Mrs. Hawtrey was explaining, "and has gone."

Headache? I should think she would have had.

I didn't bother to find another hiding-place for the necklace when I reached home. I switched on all the lights, and sat the whole blessed night—or what was left of it—with my back against the wall, so that no one could come up behind me and rob me of my most precious possession without an awful lot of racket. As soon as I decently could, I called up the Wards to find out if Billy had returned; I had changed my mind about never telling him of its loss. In fact, I was sure that the sooner we found out Mrs. Collis's connection with my stolen necklace the better off society would be.

Billy himself answered the 'phone.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

I laughed suddenly. I was holding tightly to that precious necklace as I answered:—

"Nothing's wrong. Everything's most awfully right now."

"Then something has been wrong?"

"Yes-s," I admitted. "I'll tell you when you come."

I could hear the receiver bang at the other end, and I went to powder my nose. I knew he was coming in a hurry.

It's just awful to have so many things to tell, all of them sort of fireworksy, and some of them strange and uncanny, not seeming to have any connection with anything, or any reason. I waited with the necklace in my hand, forming all sorts of beginnings and dramatic sentences; but what I said when he burst in upon me was:—

"Well, there it is!"

If he hadn't been a lawyer, accustomed to worming facts out of people and very patient, I don't suppose he ever would have found out what had happened, although I told him the story as clearly as I knew it.

"Great Scott!" he ejaculated, when I had finished. "Let me think."

He was in the middle of thinking when Martha brought me a card. The name was: "Peter Kearney."

"I don't know Peter Kearney," I remarked, passing the card to Billy.

"He's a private detective," Billy told me. "He may have some trace of the thieves."

Mr. Peter Kearney stated his case. He was a private detective in the employ of Mr. Collis. He had come to ask for the return of Mrs. Collis's necklace, which I had taken from her by force.

"Mrs. Collis's necklace?" I said, sweetly, and looked at Billy. The necklace—my necklace—was in plain view on the table.

"You are mistaken about the necklace being Mrs. Collis's," Billy said. "It belongs to Miss Callaway."

"She'll have to prove it," Kearney replied.

"That's easy," Billy returned, cheerfully. "I gave it to her."

"You'll have to prove it," Kearney said.

"I can do that in five minutes at Bright's, where I bought it."

"Oh, all right," Kearney agreed. "But Mrs. Collis can prove that the necklace is hers, purchased abroad, and duty paid at Customs."

Billy reached for the necklace.

"We'll see," he said. "Come along with me, Kearney."

I WAITED for developments. The telephone bell rang finally; I was to come to Billy's office. I started to walk to keep awake, and I've often thought what an awful thing it would have been if I had gone in a taxi, or the train, and missed the woman in the brown dress.

I was almost at the door of the office when there came a scurrying along the crowded pavement, and there, grasping my sleeve, a little dishevelled and travel-stained, was the woman in the brown dress.

"You are Miss Callaway?" she asked. "I want to return your smelling salts." And she fished that precious little green bottle from her bag. "I've been away, and only just now in the train saw your advertisement," she rushed on. "I'm ever so much obliged."

I held on to her with one hand, while I firmly grasped the little green bottle in the other. I felt I might need her to prove things.

"Will you give me your name?" I asked.

"I am Mrs. Hawtrey's masseuse," she informed me, and gave me her card. "Mrs. Greave can also recommend me. May I hope to have your patronage?"

I think I said yes; I'm not sure. I only knew that she passed on, smiling, leaving me with the bottle of smelling salts, and that a moment later I was almost running to Billy's office.

I was quite breathless as I burst past office-boys, past clerks, and into Billy's own special presence.

"I've got the bottle!" I exclaimed.

I thrust it upon him, and sank exhausted into a chair. He eyed the little bottle lying in his palm, then burst out laughing.

"Well, I'll be hanged!" he said. "That's a ridiculous thing to cause so much trouble."

"It's an heirloom," I reminded him.

"Piffle!" he exclaimed.

Really, I've never seen anything like lawyers; they are always so awfully sceptical. He looked it over thoughtfully, turned it about, removed the stopper, and smelled the contents.

"Regular salts, that," he commented. "I wonder why it was so necessary for Count Rouessel to get that bottle back?"

"'It's an heirloom," I repeated.

Of course he didn't drop the stopper purposely; it just slipped, as things have a habit of doing sometimes. But there it was on the floor, broken very nicely, and—well, I nearly had hysterics. Something gleamed as Billy picked it up.

"By George!" he exclaimed.

Suddenly he seized a paperweight, and there under my astonished eyes he smashed that green stopper to atoms.

"An emerald!" he said, holding up a huge stone, which had come cleanly from its glass encasement. "And that's why Count Rouessel was so particular about getting back his smelling salts."

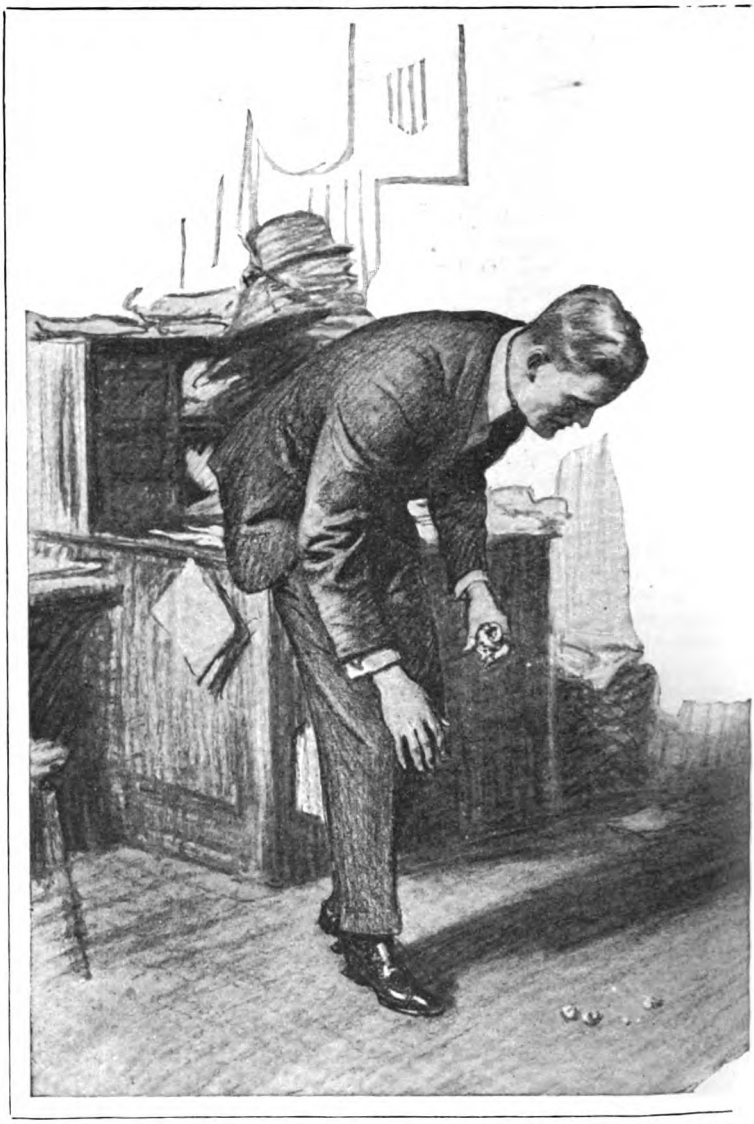
"Billy, you don't think——" I began.

"Looks like smuggling," he said. He reached for the telephone. "Get me the police," he said.

Five minutes later we were on our way to police headquarters. And with this new development, I forgot to ask, and he forgot to tell me, what had been done toward proving to whom my diamond necklace belonged.

When we arrived at police headquarters, whom should we find there but our perfectly authentic French Count? When we came in, he was trying to appear unconscious of a pair of handcuffs pinching his delicate wrists. But nothing could surprise me after all that had happened.

The chief of police ushered us into a reception-room while we waited for Mr. and



Of course he didn't drop the stopper purposely; it just slipped, as things

have a habit of doing sometimes. But there it was on the floor, broken.

Mrs. Collis to arrive. The necklace I had taken from Mrs. Collis was really her own, purchased abroad, and duty paid at Customs. My necklace had been found in the search of the Count's apartments; he had been traced through a photograph in the locket, which he had dropped at my house, and which I had picked up. The night I found my flat disordered and my necklace gone, Count Rouessel had gone there to search for his little green bottle, not believing my story about the woman in the brown dress, and evidently thinking I had a motive in wishing to keep the bottle. Of course, he did not hesitate to take along my necklace when he came across it.

My mistake was a natural one, as the necklaces were exactly alike. Billy gave Mrs. Collis hers, the chief of police gave me mine; then Billy produced the emerald.

It seems that Count Rouessel had stolen that famous emerald belonging to—oh, that Indian Prince, you remember. He had not dared to try to dispose of it in Europe, so he conceived the idea of moulding it into the stopper of a smelling salts bottle, and came to America. His scheme was so clever that he passed the Customs safely. But on the day of Mrs. Greave's dinner-party Secret Service men paid him a visit, and asked him some rather insistent questions. He thought it best to get rid of the bottle, in the event of their searching his person and rooms. I wasn't ill at all. It was a trick to give me custody of the bottle.

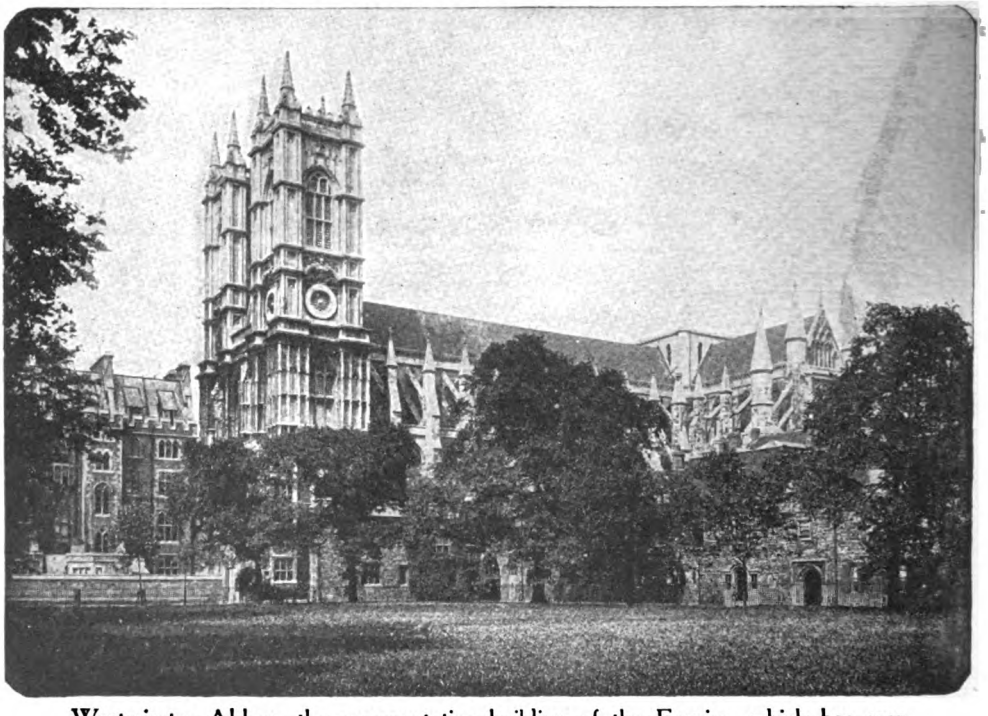
Oh, I've decided not to let Billy change the necklace, even though Mrs. Collis has one like it. You see, Billy kissed it, and—well, I'm afraid that settles it.

The Seven Wonders of Britain

THE OPINIONS OF SOME EMINENT MEN.

THE Seven Wonders of the World were the Pyramids, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Tomb of Mausolus, the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, the Colossus of Rhodes, the Statue of Jupiter by Phidias, and the Pharos of Egypt. An alternative to the last of these wonders was sometimes allowed in the Palace of Cyrus, which, like the mythical pavement of London, was said, perhaps with more truth, to be "cemented with gold."

What are the Seven Wonders of Britain?



Westminster Abbey, the representative building of the Empire, which has seen every Coronation in English history.

Photo. Valentine.

With the exception of the one alternative, the ancients seem to have arrived at a unanimous and final conclusion about the things most worth seeing in the known world, and, when their only survivor was the first and oldest of these seven, the Pyramids of Egypt—apparently as indestructible as Everest—the men of the Middle Ages made a new list of Seven—the mystical numeral—and here it is :—

1. The Coliseum of Rome ; 2. The Catacombs of Alexandria ; 3. The Great Wall of China ; 4. Stonehenge ; 5. The Leaning Tower of Pisa ; 6. The Porcelain Tower of Nankin ; 7. The Mosque of St. Sophia at Constantinople.

It will be noted at once that all these wonders of the Ancient World, and of the Middle Ages as well, are architectural, with the sole exception of the wonder-statue of Zeus by the great Greek, Phidias. But with the lapse of the centuries values have changed ; some have appreciated and others have depreciated. Thus, to-day, palaces and tombs of emperors and kings do not loom so large as formerly, and we might prefer the house where Shakespeare, or the straw-thatched "biggin" where Burns first drew breath, to Buckingham Palace or even Holyrood, and the simple grass-grown grave of Wordsworth, in Grasmere churchyard, to Frogmore.

Poets' Corner.
Photo. H. N. King.

Interior of Westminster Abbey, looking east.
Photo. Valentine.

Furthermore, the feeling for objects of natural beauty and interest, as well as of sentimental and even fictitious associations, is almost entirely a modern growth. The Lake District of Cumberland and Westmorland was practically "discovered" by Gray and Wordsworth, De Quincey and Southey. Even their immediate predecessors, almost their contemporaries, were wont to regard mountains and moors as "barbarous," and Cremorne and Vauxhall as much more delectable and desirable.

It is with such and similar considerations we must approach this question of the Seven Wonders of Britain. History, tradition, fiction, poetry, art, beauty, and patriotism must all be consulted and their claims duly weighed. But when all these things have been brought under review and valued, what are the seven spots, buildings, places, scenes, best worth visiting in Britain ?

Supposing, for instance, a visitor, well primed with book knowledge of Britain, but an entire stranger to it personally, should pay a literal "flying visit" to these shores—for choice a Colonial with mixed Saxon and Celtic blood in his veins—and that he should be restricted, as in the old fairy stories, to seven alighting places, to be chosen entirely at his own discretion, how should he exercise it ?

That is one way of putting the question :

" What are the Seven Wonders of Britain ? " and, in order to test our own judgment, we made our own list, and then requested a few representative men to send us theirs. The result is amusing and instructive, and once more illustrative of the old sayings that opinions differ and that no two men think alike upon any topic.

Our own list is as follows :—

1. The Vale of Avalon, because it contains the ruins of Glastonbury Abbey, the cradle of British Christianity, the ancient city of Wells, the Isle of Athelney, and the Cheddar Gorge and stalactite caves.

2. Stratford-on-Avon, because it is the birthplace and the burial-place of the representative man of the Anglo-Saxon race and its central point of interest.

3. Stonehenge, because it is the only object of interest in Britain which the men of the Middle Ages regarded as a great world-wonder, and also because it represents a type of civilization in this island probably anterior to the age of Tutankhamen.

4. Edinburgh Castle and its precincts, because it is the nucleus of the most beautiful city in Britain as well as of the ancient Kingdom of Scotland, and is famous alike in history, tradition, and literature.

5. Loch Katrine from the Trossachs end, or Grasmere from Loughrigg Terrace, because both have literary associations and both compete, pretty equally, for first place in Britain's beauty show.

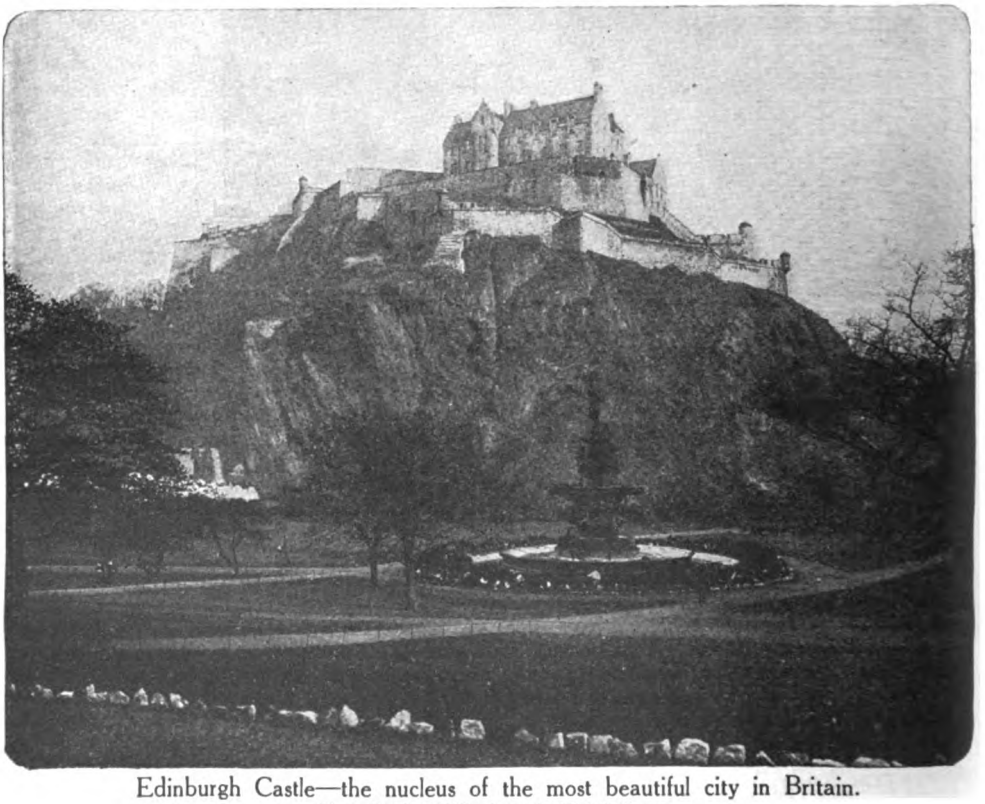
6. Westminster Abbey, because it is, without shadow of doubt, the representative building of the Empire, the resting-place of its ancient kings, and of its kings by the divine right of achievement in art, in literature, in government, in character, and, latterly, because it contains the ashes of that Unknown Warrior who represents the manhood of the race.

7. The Tower of London, because it is the best-preserved of Britain's ancient fortresses and is the nucleus of the world's metropolis.

Perhaps our readers will send us their lists, and, meanwhile, we give those furnished at our request by a number of eminent and thoroughly representative men.

BISHOP WELLDON,

the genial Dean of Durham, writes : " The Seven Wonders of the World, I think, were all buildings or structures ; no one of them



Edinburgh Castle—the nucleus of the most beautiful city in Britain.

Photo. London, Midland, and Scottish Railway.

was only a place of interesting personal or historical associations. But the Editor seems to take a wider view of the Seven Wonders of Great Britain, and I shall venture to follow his guidance.

"The Seven Wonders, then, which I think to be most worthy of mention are:—

1. Stonehenge, as the greatest monument of pre-Christian civilization.

2. The Tower of London, which, with the Thames flowing beneath it, seems above all buildings to incorporate the life of the capital of the British Empire.

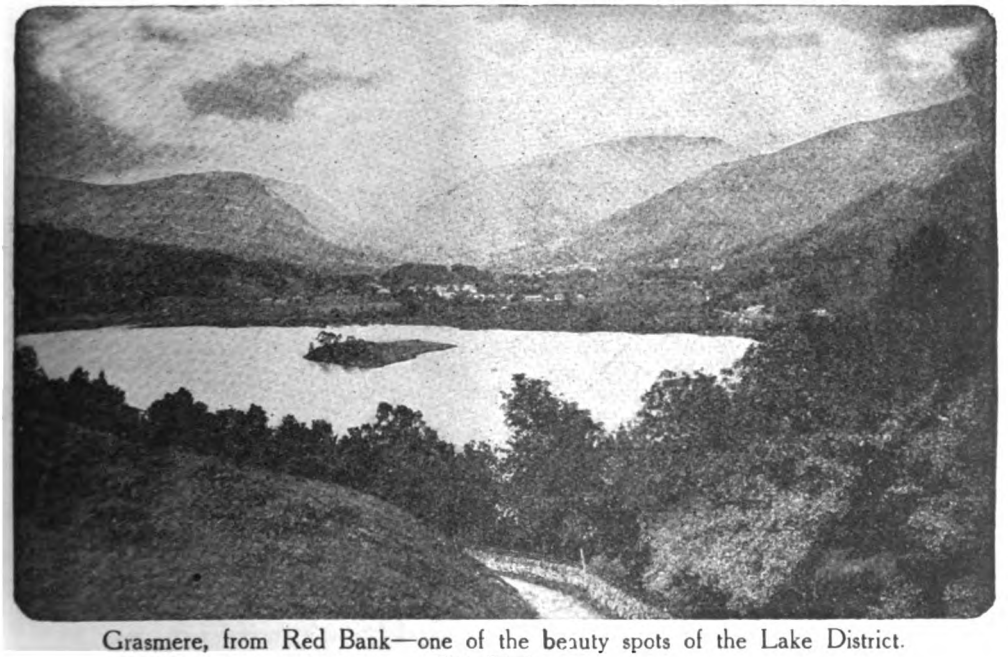
3. The Abbey Church of Westminster, for it has seen every Coronation in English history.

4. Windsor Castle, as the principal home of the Sovereign of Great Britain: and to Windsor Castle I would add the most famous English public school, Eton College, which adjoins it.

5. Arthur's Seat at Edinburgh, as the embodiment of Scottish history, with the unique panoramic view which it affords, and, may I add, its memories of Scott.

6. One of the two ancient universities,

Rydal Water, beloved of Wordsworth, De Quincey, and Hartley Coleridge above all the other lakes in this beautiful district.
Photo. W. F. Taylor.



Grasmere, from Red Bank—one of the beauty spots of the Lake District.
Photo. Valentine.

The Tower of London: Traitors' Gate.
Photo. Photocrom Co.

Oxford and Cambridge, perhaps Oxford as the more beautiful, although Cambridge has been the University of Poets, whilst there are four or five Cambridge men—Bacon, Newton, Cromwell, Milton, and perhaps Darwin — who may claim a distinction hardly rivalled by the sons of Oxford.

7. Stratford-on-Avon, as Shakespeare's home; especially, perhaps, Anne Hathaway's cottage, where the poet, with his mind ranging over earth and heaven, used to court a woman eight years older than himself."

As a sharp contrast comes that of a great Labour Leader, the leader, in fact, of the Labour Party in the last Parliament, and, during the last year of the Great War, an able and statesmanlike Food Controller,

J. R. CLYNES, M.P.

As the Seven Wonders of Great Britain he chooses :—

1. The Slums of a Great Town, because it is the wonder of wonders that a Christian nation should for a moment tolerate them and the conditions to which they are due.

2. The East-end of London, because it is the most extensive and by far the dullest area of brick and mortar in the world.

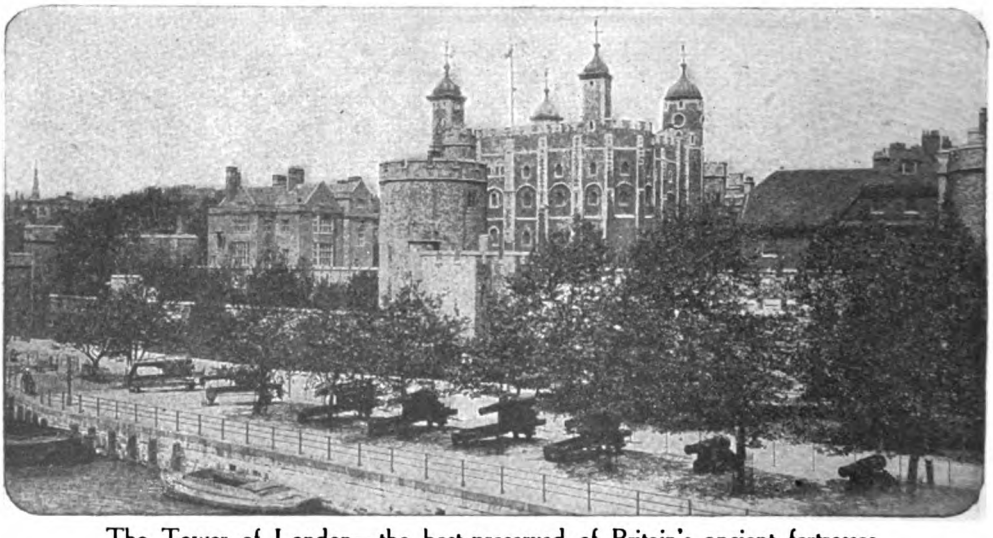
3. Windermere Lake, because it is the largest and most beautiful sheet of water in England, and stands for one of the fairest districts in the world.

4. The Black Country, because, once beautiful, it is now the gibe of the world because it is a supreme example of the way men can make a mess of things.

5. The Mansion and Grounds of an Industrial Magnate.

6. The Cottage of Samuel Crompton, Hole i' the Wall, near Bolton, because Crompton's invention made the Cotton Trade, the biggest industry in the world, although he himself died, like so many of the world's greatest benefactors, in poverty and neglect.

7. Woolwich Arsenal, where Britain, in the Twentieth Century of the Christian Era, still makes munitions of war, and in



The Tower of London—the best-preserved of Britain's ancient fortresses.
Photo. Photocrom Co.

place of articles for our peaceful needs must produce deadly weapons for conflicts from which policies founded on wisdom and justice would save us.

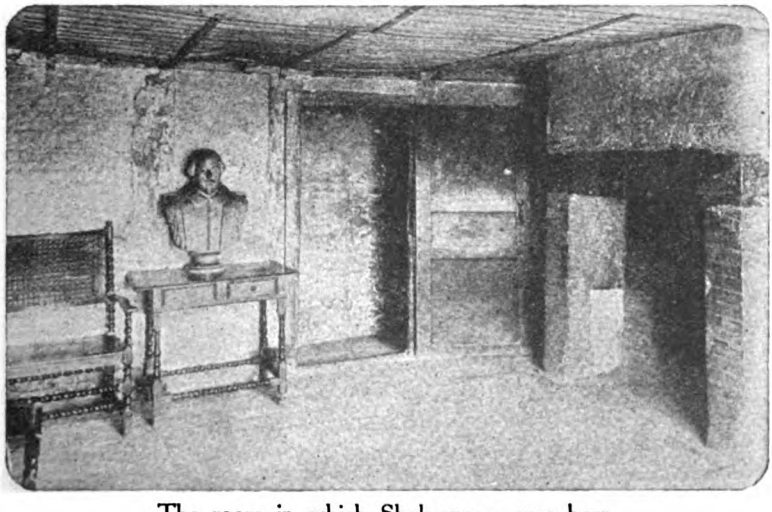
SIR GILBERT PARKER, BART.,
the famous novelist and playwright,

Anne Hathaway's Cottage.
Photo. Photocrom Co.

Shakespeare's birthplace, Stratford-on-Avon.
Photo. Photocrom Co.

It must be obvious to everyone what the reasons are for selecting these Seven Wonders of Great Britain, because their historical, national, and spiritual meanings are evident to all. They are linked up with all those elements which have made for British progress

and himself a Canadian whose great Canadian novel, "The Seats of the Mighty," was one of the memorable books of the latter years of the last century, writes briefly: "I should say to a Colonial friend paying a flying visit to the British Isles that he should visit first Westminster Abbey, then the Tower of London, then Runnymede, Stonehenge, Edinburgh, Winchester, and Hampton Court.



The room in which Shakespeare was born.
Photo. Photocrom Co.

and British glory, and should greatly interest all who come to us from our Overseas Dominions."

The Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, constantly in touch with things beautiful and cultural, is a man to be regarded with attention when he makes a choice of things best worth seeing, and though he gives no reasons for his choice his list is interesting and significant. Thus, then,

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON,

the delightful and scholarly essavist :—

1. Wells.
2. The Pool of London.
3. Fountains Abbey.
4. Malham Cove and Gordale Scar.
5. The Weald of Sussex from Lewes Down.
6. Rydal Water.
7. Chipping Campden.

Gordale Scar may be seen in a vast picture which hangs in the Tate Gallery, and is one of the wildest pieces of inland scenery in Britain, whilst the Weald of Sussex, as Kipling and Belloc hold, is the seat of Britain's most ancient civilization. Rydal Water was beloved of Wordsworth, De Quincey, and Hartley Coleridge above all the other lakes, and Fountains Abbey is the most beautiful if not the most historic ruin in Britain, while the Pool of London includes the Tower which represents English history, and the shipping of the world which represents British commerce and influence. The question may arise why the learned Master of Magdalene prefers the beautiful Chipping Campden to its neighbour, Stratford-on-Avon.

H. DE VERE STACPOOLE,

the brilliant author of " The Blue Lagoon " and its sequel, " The Garden of God," makes a similar highly personal and original choice, in which obviousness and unexpectedness are about equally balanced. His list is as follows :—

1. The British Museum, because it contains the Elgin Marbles, the most beautiful of all the works of man.
2. Westminster Abbey, because it holds the soul of the nation.
3. Bonchurch, Isle of Wight, because, as Swinburne said, it is the most beautiful little place that God ever made.
4. Abbotsbury, of a summer afternoon, because here and then you see the Past as nowhere else you can see it.
5. Stratford-on-Avon—you know why.
6. Edinburgh Castle, because it makes me wish to be a Scotsman—almost.
7. Newmarket Heath at any point of it except the enclosures and grand stand, because it is the healthiest and happiest spot in England.

The choice needs but little comment in spite of its surprises, but it may be said that Bonchurch will in the future be associated with Stacpoole as well as Swinburne, for he lives there, and that Abbotsbury is an old-world fishing village in the Thomas Hardy country.

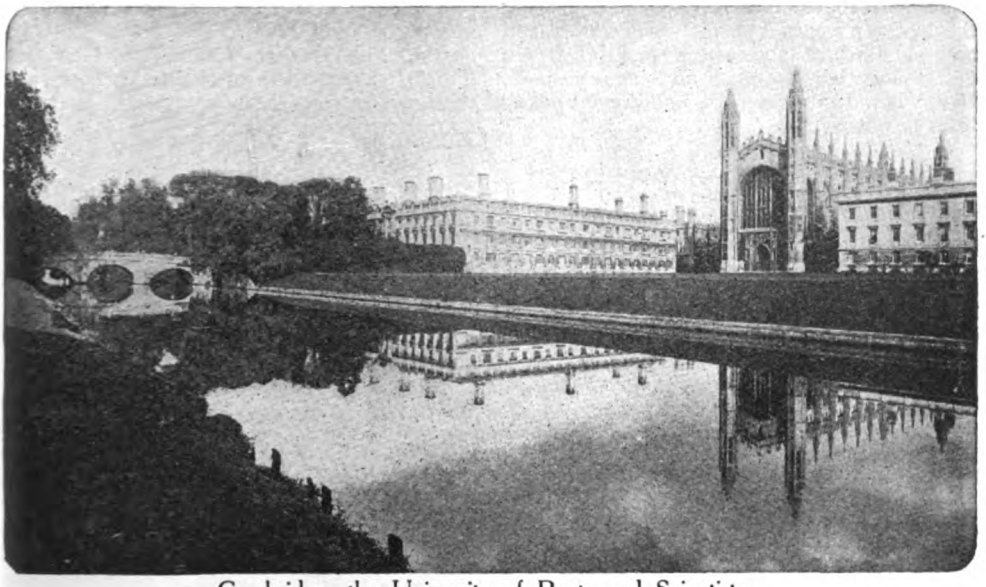
SIR HARRY H. JOHNSTON, G.C.M.G.,

that famous traveller and proconsul, novelist, painter, and biologist, to whom the world is an open book every page of which he has read, sends a highly characteristic reply, " surrounded as I am with proof sheets and patterns of paint and chintz "—for he is preparing a book for the press and " has the painter in." He gives the following list :—

1. The Roman Wall, Northumbria, Carlisle to Newcastle.

Stonehenge, the greatest monument of pre-Christian civilization.

Photo. Photocrom Co.



Cambridge, the University of Poets and Scientists.
Photo. Stearn & Sons.

2. The Cheddar Cliffs, Stalactite Caverns, Wookey Hole; Glastonbury; Wells Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace and Moat (all close together).

3. Beachy Head and the Seven Sisters (the chalk cliffs of England).

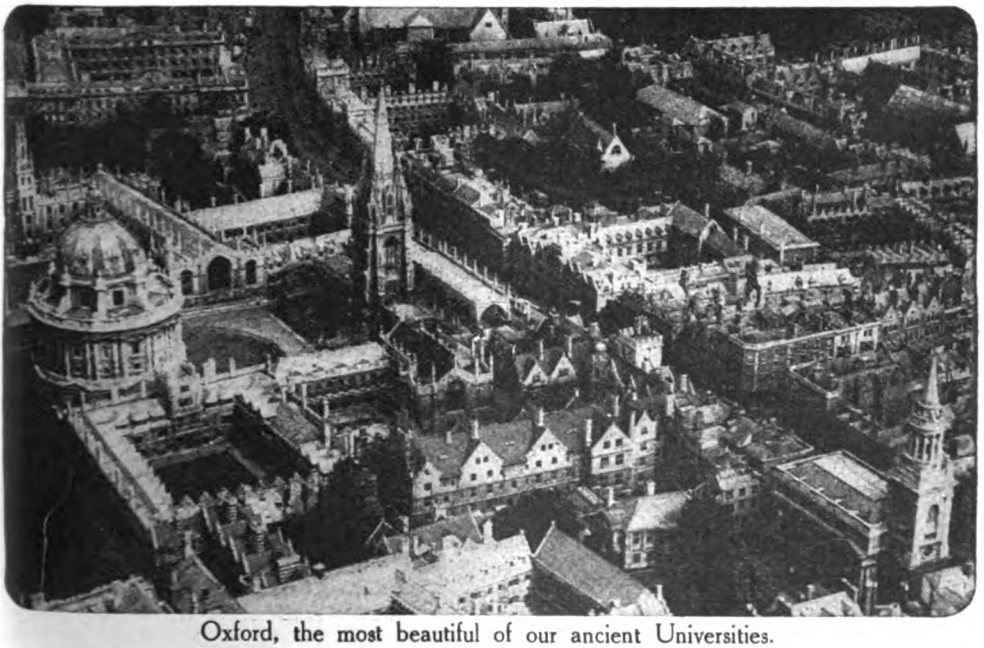
4. Ely Cathedral.

5. Oxford.

6. Cambridge.

7. The Wye Valley from Ross to Tintern Abbey.

"Some of these 'wonders,'" continues Sir Harry, "in beauty and history may be strewn with sandwich papers, or made blastingly ugly with corrugated iron, or filthy with frowzy gipsy encampments, or



Oxford, the most beautiful of our ancient Universities.
Photo. Aerofilms, Ltd.

inane with roadside advertisements. During the last ten years I have been so outraged and shocked at the way the English are destroying their wonders and beauty spots, that when I can afford a holiday I usually take it abroad."

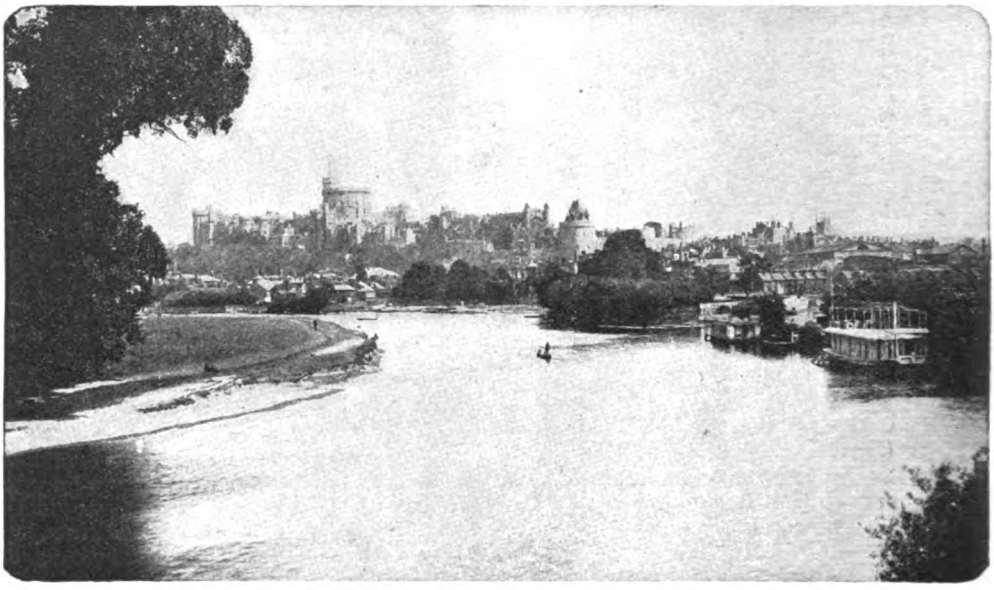
HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL,

the well-known novelist, who did for Harrow School what Judge Hughes did for Rugby,

5. The Trossachs, because even trippers cannot spoil them.
6. The English Lakes, on their own merits, regardless of the Lake Poets.
7. Clovelly, because there isn't one modern house in it.

LORD LEVERHULME

may be trusted to strike out a path of his own, whether in business or anything else.



Windsor Castle—the principal home of the Royal Family.
Photo. H. N. King.

by " The Hill " and " Tom Brown's School-days " respectively, writes with a mixture of the serious and humorous the following list :—

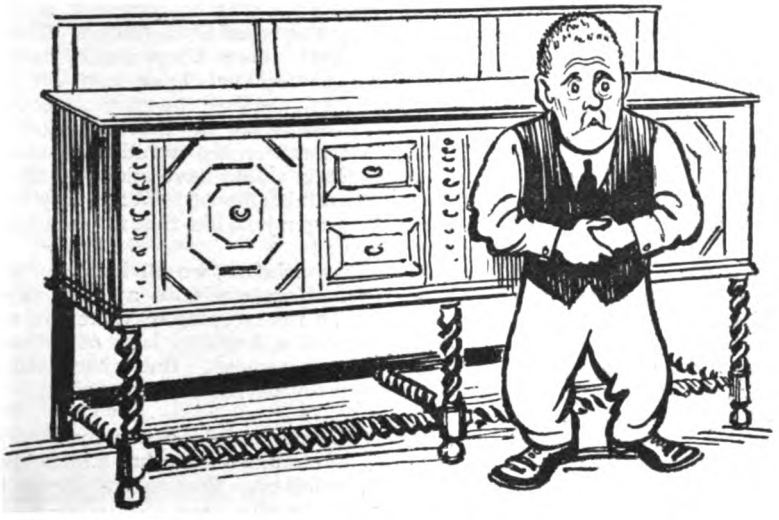
1. Westminster Abbey, for reasons too obvious to state.
2. The National Gallery, for reasons given at length in the catalogue.
3. Windsor Castle, because of the Windsor Family.
4. The New Forest, because it is so old.

His will always be a personal choice unlike anyone else's. These personal characteristics account for the following highly original choice of the Seven Wonders of Britain :—

1. The whole of Great Britain.
2. Its men.
3. Its women.
4. Its children.
5. Their courage.
6. Their nerve.
7. Their conceit, which prevents them knowing they are beaten—if they ever are.

The consensus of opinion, then, would appear to be that the seven things most worth seeing in Britain must be selected from :—

WESTMINSTER ABBEY.
EDINBURGH.
THE ENGLISH LAKE DISTRICT.
THE TOWER OF LONDON.
STRATFORD-ON-AVON.
STONEHENGE.
WINDSOR CASTLE.
OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE.



THE PROMOTION

By FLORENCE A. KILPATRICK

Author of "Our Elizabeth," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

H. M. BATEMAN

TO look at little Prosser you would not have thought he was the sort of person to cherish an ambition. You would never have suspected the tenacity of his aspirations. He was such a meek little man, so timid, so insignificant, and that he should even hope—— But I will explain the situation.

Prosser was employed in the furniture emporium of Messrs. Hacker and Smartt, Bros., situated in a busy suburban thoroughfare known as the Broadway. When he first entered the service of the firm thirty years ago, the term "emporium" could not have been applied to the premises. In fact, it was known as "old Ben Hacker's," and specialized in second-hand furniture.

You ought to see the place now! Why, it exudes prosperity. There are five shops; each shop has a separate department, each department has its manager, and each manager has his assistant. And the stock in the showrooms—all new and shining and expensive. Stay! I had almost forgotten that there is still a second-hand department. It is, however, situated underground and, following the lead of our greater stores, is termed the "Bargain Basement." But the *employés* of Messrs. Hacker and Smartt consider it a blot on their escutcheon; it is referred to shamefacedly, and only under compulsion will they reveal its existence.

It was over this unpopular department that little Prosser presided. All day long he dwelt in the tenebrous gloom of his Bargain Basement, dusting, arranging, and ticketing his dingy and generally battered goods.

Perhaps you wonder why, after being thirty years in the service of the firm, Prosser still lingered at the foot of the ladder, why he had not even put his foot on the first rung that led to promotion? I will tell you the reasons—for there were two of them, and both were identical. The obstacles to his success were the legs of little Prosser.

It hardly seems fair to dwell on a subject upon which he was so sensitive, but it is necessary at this point that I should describe his appearance. Nature had begun on Prosser obviously meaning to do her best. She had fashioned him with a massive head, broad shoulders, and a strong muscular chest. And then, quite unfairly, she seemed to have lost interest in her subject. The end of him was out of all proportion to the beginning. His legs were undeniably short.

I will leave you to imagine how they

blighted Prosser's career. As the years went on he became of the opinion that the race for life is like all other races—long legs count more than brains. Perhaps he was unduly embittered, but he knew how heavily he was handicapped in an elegant establishment like Messrs. Hacker and Smartt's. His one ambition was to appear as salesman in one of the handsome, glittering showrooms on the ground floor, to handle good new furniture, to deal with prosperous-looking customers. Alas, to qualify for this position one must have a commanding presence. One's legs must be of the normal size, at least.

Prosser had seen so many youths come in as apprentices, get promoted to the showrooms, and often scale to the dizzy heights of a berth in a West-end store; yet he still remained a second-hand assistant, musing heavily over his lot. Not that he had much time to brood. Whenever there was an extra heavy job of unpacking, when furniture had to be loaded on to the vans or unloaded, there was Prosser in the thick of the fray. Raw assistants, young enough to be his grandsons, would call out, "Hi, little Prosser, look slippy, come and give a hand here!" The young ladies employed in the household and hardware departments sent him out on their errands during his dinner hour. The bright spirits of the establishment made endless jokes at his expense. It was rumoured that he was married to an over-tall, gaunt woman who took in washing and made him turn the mangle every evening. Young Bentley, the assistant in the carpet department, had a turn for drawing, and made sketches of little Prosser mangling while an Amazon stood over him with a truncheon. They were really very funny, but he was such an excellent subject for caricature.

Certainly it must be a tragedy to have short legs. For despite these sneers Prosser knew his work much better than the rest of the staff, who, on the whole, judged furniture only by the price ticket, and as something to be "cleared" as quickly as possible to make way for new stock.

But Prosser *loved* furniture. He knew and understood wood. He could have told you that the best fir timber comes from Riga, the strongest from Danzig; that American deals are too soft and those from Sweden are inclined to warp; he regarded with sheer ecstasy the soft sheen of the silver birch, the rich deep glow of mahogany, the superb "wave" markings of satin-wood. He was no lover of lacquered furniture, having the same preference for natural polished wood as an artist has for real flowers compared with artificial. Nobody at Hacker and Smartt's suspected the innate knowledge that he possessed, no more than they suspected his ambition. This was just as well. How they would have laughed could they but have pictured his short, squat figure with the grizzled head and meek dog-like eyes in the show-room! What sketches Bentley would have made! How much it would have added to the gaiety of the establishment! Why, they would have kept up a joke like that for months—perhaps years!

Nevertheless, we all have our chances in life. Napoleon (also a short man) missed his on the morning of Waterloo, while Nero showed a hopeless lack of initiative at a crucial moment. But when little Prosser's moment arrived he leapt at it.

IT was brought about by a combination of circumstances that almost seemed pre-ordained. Prosser was in the big showroom, moving some wardrobes to make room for a dining-room suite that was to be delivered that afternoon. The hour was one o'clock, when most of the staff were at lunch. Suddenly Mr. Perkins, the only manager on guard at the moment, was called away to speak to "the head," and Prosser was left alone. He continued to move wardrobes until the sweat ran down his brow, and when the last was in place he paused to run the tips of his fingers lovingly over the surface of a polished oak sideboard which caught his attention. "A good bit of wood," he murmured, "well made—well seasoned——"

"Excuse me," said a feminine voice behind him, "is there anyone who can attend to me?"

Prosser turned and faced the customer He knew, and you and I know, that his obvious duty was, firstly, to ask the lady to be seated; secondly, to fetch Mr. Perkins; and thirdly, to efface himself as quickly as possible.

He did none of these things.

"Certainly, madam. Step this way," said little Prosser.

He realized that his moment had come. His hand trembled, his voice was just a trifle unsteady, but that was all. The customer, who saw before her a squat, undersized man in dingy shirt-sleeves and with a perspiring brow, had no idea that he was at the moment scaling Olympian heights.

"And what can I have the pleasure of showing you, madam?"

Why, the jargon of the showroom came as trippingly off his tongue as it did off Mr. Perkins's. He might have been in the place all his life.

"I want a sideboard," explained the customer, "but it must be something solid—and *good*."

Although it was not Prosser's affair, he knew every bit of stock in that department. Rapidly his mind ran over the sideboards—his first customer must have the best he could offer—the very best. No pseudo-Sheraton or cheap Jacobean imitations for this peerless woman. Then he remembered the oaken sideboard he was admiring when she interrupted him. Reverently he led her before it.

"This," he said, solemnly, "is the best sideboard we have, but it isn't the dearest. Run your finger over the surface, madam—no, not so hard—lightly. Look at the rich colouring—do you see how the grain seems to rise to the surface?"

The customer seemed surprised at the intensity of his tone. His earnestness impressed her so much that, after looking at all the other sideboards, she decided on the one Prosser recommended. In fact, she even seemed anxious to secure the prize. "I'll write out a cheque for it now," she remarked.

Prosser thrilled. What did he care that at that moment Mr. Perkins appeared. He was walking slowly and was in close converse with none other than that great man, the head manager.

Perkins was the first to take in the situation—a denizen of the Bargain Basement in shirt-sleeves parleying with a customer! "Prosser!" he said, in tones of thunder. And then again, "*Prosser!*"

But Prosser, heedless of the wrath to come, stepped up to him, his eyes shining. "Please, sir, I've sold a sideboard," he panted.

Mr. Perkins frowned heavily, as did the head manager also. Really, the situation was appallingly unbusinesslike. The shabby, dingy man, blurting out that he had managed to sell a sideboard, as if such a thing happened so rarely on the premises. It was a disgrace to the smartest department in the establishment. Mr. Perkins mentally decided that Prosser should pay for his indiscretion—men had got dismissed for far less. He was glad the head had witnessed the disgraceful incident for himself.

"Go—to—to your basement," he muttered, brushing past little Prosser.

Prosser did not budge. All the horrible injustice of life rose before him as he saw the tall, imperturbable, self-satisfied Mr. Perkins go up to his customer and remark suavely, "You require something in sideboards, madam?"

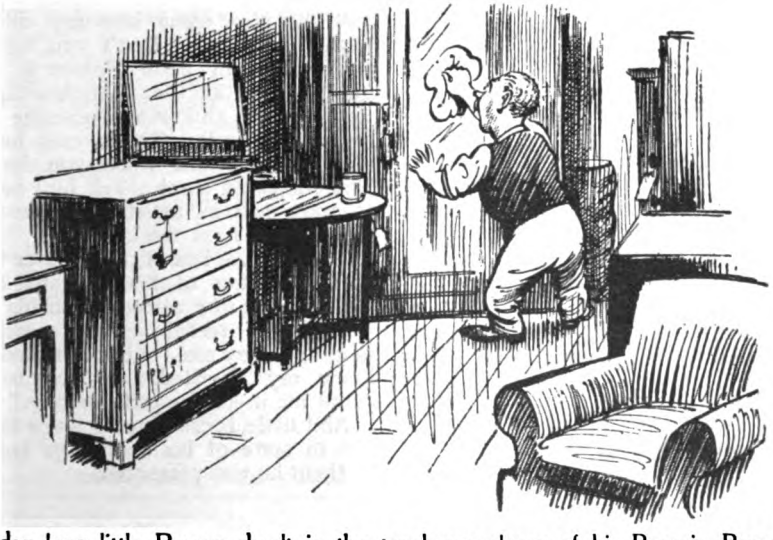
"I had decided on that one," she said, pointing to her purchase.

Mr. Perkins looked surprised. It was an unpopular sideboard, as he well knew, and one he had often tried to get rid of by "pushing" it, but in vain. "Certainly, madam. It is an excellent piece of furniture. You could not do better. Look how well the drawers are made, how smoothly they run——"

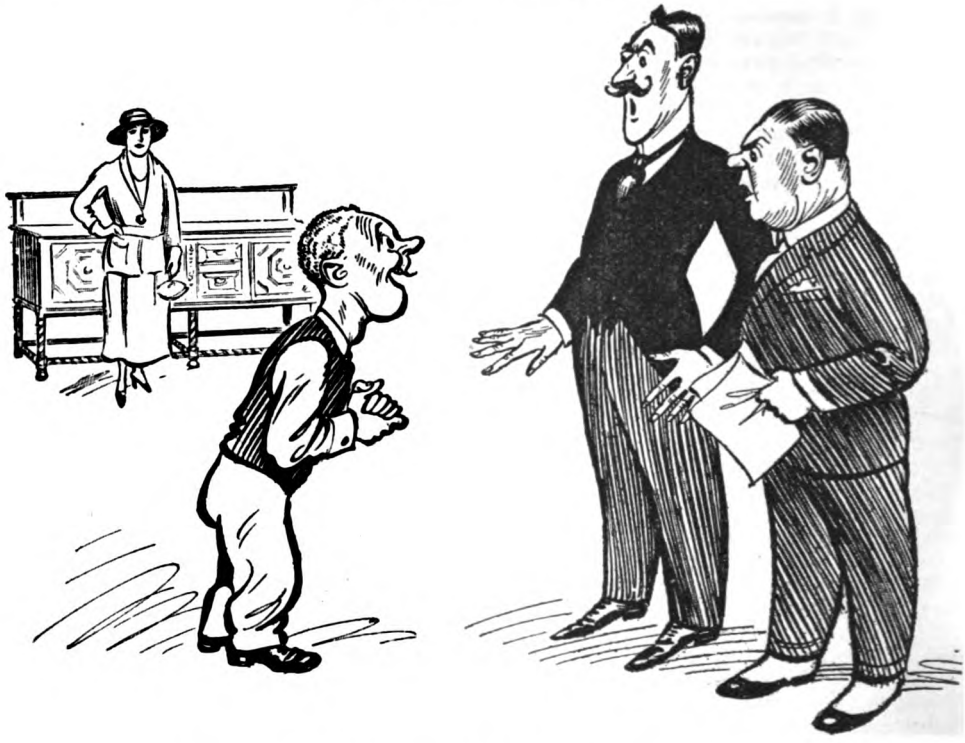
"Wait a moment," said the customer, evidently perplexed; "isn't it rather small?"

"It is perhaps a trifle under the ordinary proportions, madam——"

"Yet it seemed to be the full size when that other assistant was showing it to me." She looked at him and then across at little Prosser in a puzzled way. "I believe it's because he is so much smaller," she pro-



All day long little Prosser dwelt in the tenebrous gloom of his Bargain Basement, dusting his dingy and generally battered goods.



"Please, sir, I've sold a sideboard," little Prosser panted.

nounced at last. "But I'm glad I found out in time." And she put her cheque-book back into her bag.

"But is there nothing else we can show you, madam?" began the indefatigable Mr. Perkins.

"No, thanks. I've seen all the other sideboards, and only that one took my fancy. I'm sorry it is too small." And she made an ominous movement towards the door. Obviously this promising customer was about to slip out of their hands, when the head, taking in the situation at a glance, stepped into the breach. Astute chap, very. To be head manager of an establishment like Messrs. Hacker and Smartt's at thirty-five—well, you can imagine for yourself what a brain the man must have had. He now hurried up to Mr. Perkins and firmly drew him away from the customer.

"I believe that little—er—*Mr.* Prosser was serving this lady," he remarked, and beckoned to little Prosser to conclude his "deal."

The situation was saved. The customer took the small sideboard after all, and while she was being bowed out by a beatific little Prosser the head was explaining to Mr. Perkins.

"The idea came into my mind like a flash," he said. "Don't you see there are possibilities in little Prosser? He is so out of proportion that he makes the furniture look bigger and more massive when he stands beside it. That's why he disposed of that sideboard when you have failed. The chap's an asset. Tell him to be ready to start duty as assistant salesman in this department next week."

Ten minutes later little Prosser was in the darkest corner of his Bargain Basement, wiping tears of gratitude from his eyes.

"They've recognized my worth at last, in spite of my size," he murmured. "Ah, I knew my knowledge of furniture would stand me in good stead one day."

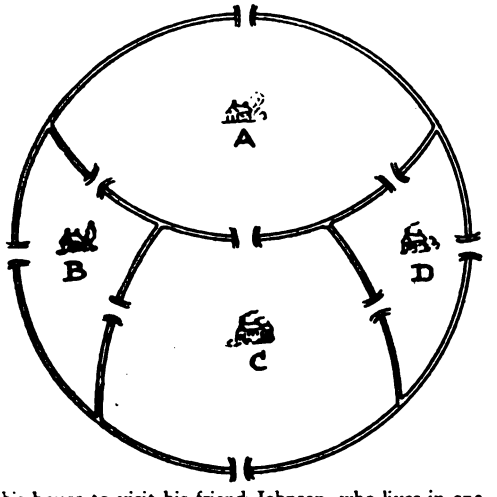
And little Prosser never knew that it was not in spite of his short legs but because of them he was promoted.

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

665.—THE NINE BRIDGES.

THE illustration represents the map of a district with a peculiar system of irrigation. The lines are waterways enclosing the four islands, A, B, C, and D, each with its house, and it will be seen that there are nine bridges available. Whenever Tompkins leaves



his house to visit his friend Johnson, who lives in one of the others, he always carries out the eccentric rule of crossing every one of the bridges once, and once only, before arriving at his destination. How many different routes has he to select from? You may choose any house you like as the residence of Tompkins, but you must never let him cross his own track on a journey.

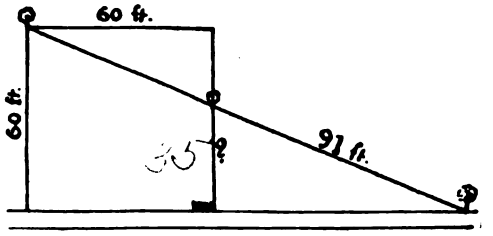
666.—WORD BUILDING.

A CORRESPONDENT, L. V. E. O., sends me from Johannesburg the following. Each successive missing word contains an added letter, as indicated by the dots. You may, of course, reassemble the letters at each step.

. think . . likely that the last . . . between Luther and the Church vanished at the . . . . of Worms. The . . . . . published by the Emperor did him little . . . . . and induced Luther to . . . . . the speedy fall of a . . . . . papal authority. Nevertheless, humanity's bill to Charles V. has been fully . . . . . and it ill behoves us to . . . . . his efforts to maintain what he thought only just and right.

667.—A FENCE PROBLEM.

THIS is a problem that is very frequently brought to my notice in various forms. It is generally difficult,



but in the form in which I present it it should be easy to the cunning solver. A man has a square field, 60ft. by 60ft., with other property, adjoining the highway. For some reason he put up a straight fence in the line of the three trees, as shown, and the length of fence from the middle tree to the tree on the road was just 91ft. What is the distance in exact feet from the middle tree to the gate on the road?

668.—ALPHABETICAL ARITHMETIC.

I HAVE noticed that my readers have a special liking for this class of puzzle. Here is an innocent little thing that I know will keep them agreeably employed for umpteen minutes.

$$\begin{array}{rl} & \text{F G} \\ \text{Less A B multiplied by C} = & \text{D E} \\ \hline \text{Leaving} & \text{H I} \end{array}$$

Each letter stands for a different figure (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9), and o is not allowed.

669.—AN ENIGMA.

WHAT, of all things in the world, is the longest and the shortest, the swiftest and the slowest, the most divisible and the most extended, the most neglected and the most regretted; without which nothing can be done; which devours all that is little and ennobles all that is great?—*Voltaire.*

Solutions to Last Month's Puzzles.

661.—DISORDERED COUNTERS.

PLAY as follows, only be careful to note that the figures refer to the numbers of the circles: not to those on the counters:—

9–A, 3–9, 7–3, 2–B–7, 8–2–B, 4–8–2, A–4–8, 9–A–4, 3–9–A, 7–3–9, B–7–3, 2–B–7, 6–2–B, 8–2–6, 4–8–2, 10–4–8, A–4–10, 8–4, 2–8, B–2, 7–B, 3–7, 9–3, 5–9–A, 3–9–5, 7–3–9, 1–7–3, B–7–1, 2–B–7, 8–2–B, 4–8–2, A–4–8, 9–A–4, 3–9–A, 7–3–9, B–7–3, 2–B–7, 8–2, 4–8, A–4. Total, 40 moves.

662.—BEESWAX.

THE key is as follows:—

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	o
A	T	Q	B	K	X	S	W	E	P

from which we get

9	1	7	9	4	7	4	7	6	
4	o	8	8	5	7	9	2	3	
5	o	9	o	8	9	5	5	3	

and BEESWAX represents the number 4 9 9 7 8 1 6.

663.—MY LADY'S GARDEN.

THE "three right lines" tell us that it is a triangle, and as it contains a "right angle" it is a right-angled triangle. As the "space and ambit" are the same it is clear that the area is the same as the sum of the three sides. Also "arithmetic train" can only mean that the lengths of the three sides are in arithmetical progression. All these conditions are complied with if the garden measures 6, 8, and 10 rods (or something else) on its three sides.

664.—THE RUNNER'S REFRESHMENT.

As the radius is t, the diameter is $2t$. The diameter multiplied by Π (the Greek letter *pi*) gives us the circumference, $2t\Pi$ miles. As he goes round n times $2t\Pi n$ equals the number of miles run, and, as he drinks s quarts per mile, he consumes $2t\Pi ns$ quarts. We can put the factors in any order: therefore the answer is $2\Pi nts$ (2 pints) or one quart!

A NEW QUINNEY STORY.

A COUNTERFEIT PRESENTMENT

by

H. A. VACHELL

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMPBELL

I.

THAT noble and puissant Prince, the Marquess of Mel, had been the friend and patron of Joe Quinney for more years than either cared to reckon. Lord Mel was the elder of the two, and Quinney had noticed with sorrow that since the War the troubles and anxieties that beset great landowners had left lines upon his friend's kind face.

One morning Lord Mel sent for Quinney, and received him in the library of his town house. Quinney glanced with shining eyes at the familiar treasures, the porcelain, the miniatures, the pictures by Dutch masters.

"Sit down, my dear fellow."

A note of nervousness in Lord Mel's courteous voice challenged Joe's attention.

"Joe, I'm desperately driven. I hoped to hand over intact to my son what I inherited from my father, but it cannot be—it cannot be. He knows that as well as I do. Well, something must go."

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" sighed Quinney.

"The problem resolves itself into one word—*what?*"

Quinney glanced apprehensively at everything in the beautiful room.

"My lady's best rope of pearls has gone."

Quinney nodded mournfully. He knew where they had gone—to repose upon the ample bosom of Mrs. Abraham Guggenheimer.

"I have decided, Joe, to sell the Van Eyck."

Quinney groaned. The picture hung above the mantelpiece. A somewhat similar example of Jan Van Eyck is one of the glories of the Louvre. The incomparable freshness and brilliancy of the colouring set Time at defiance. Even Quinney, with all his experience, might have thought that it was painted recently had he not known better. The father of oil-painting made and used lasting pigments.

"It ain't going to America, my lord?"

"I fear there is no other market. However, I didn't send for you to argue about that. I want it copied. There is a man at The Hague who is a marvel. You can copy the original frame. And, under thick glass, there will remain to me an—illusion, a mirage."

Lord Mel turned his back upon Quinney and blew his nose. Quinney blew his, whereupon my lord laughed.

"You feel this as I do, my old friend."

Tears were in Quinney's eyes as he bowed his head. Lord Mel continued, calmly:—

"I have sent for Maartens, the copyist. But I can't stick the idea of seeing him at work here. There's a limit to everything. And we don't want the fact of selling the picture to leak out till it is sold. There will be the usual howl of protestation from the crowd, who wouldn't subscribe sixpence to prevent a masterpiece leaving this country. The nation—so I'm privately advised—can't afford to buy it."

"Damn the War!" ejaculated Quinney.

"It has occurred to me that you have, probably, some attic at the top of your house where Maartens could copy the picture without a soul, except ourselves, being the wiser. Maartens is to be trusted. Whilst he is copying the picture you will copy the frame. What say you?"

"Your lordship can rely on me. I have the very attic for the purpose. It has been so used before."

Copyright, 1923, by H. A. Vachell.

"Good! My servants and friends will think that an old picture is being cleaned or exhibited elsewhere. But, in any case, I am leaving town for the country. By the time I return the work will be done."

"Yes, my lord."

II.

QUINNEY superintended the removal of the Van Eyck to Soho Square, and he managed so cunningly that not a soul except his wife, Susan, was the wiser. The picture was smaller than a kit-cat. Lord Mel and Quinney took it down. Quinney covered it with sacking, carried it into a taxi, and hid it in the attic after his workmen had finished work for the day. A new lock was placed upon the attic door, with two keys to it.

Mr. Jan Maartens presented himself at Soho Square.

Quinney eyed him with that wrinkled interrogation which first sight of any foreigner provokes in an honest Englishman. Mr. Maartens looked what he was, the simplest and most guileless of men. He had spent his life copying Van Eyck and Memling, and had acquired a skill and technique positively uncanny. He showed Quinney a prepared panel.

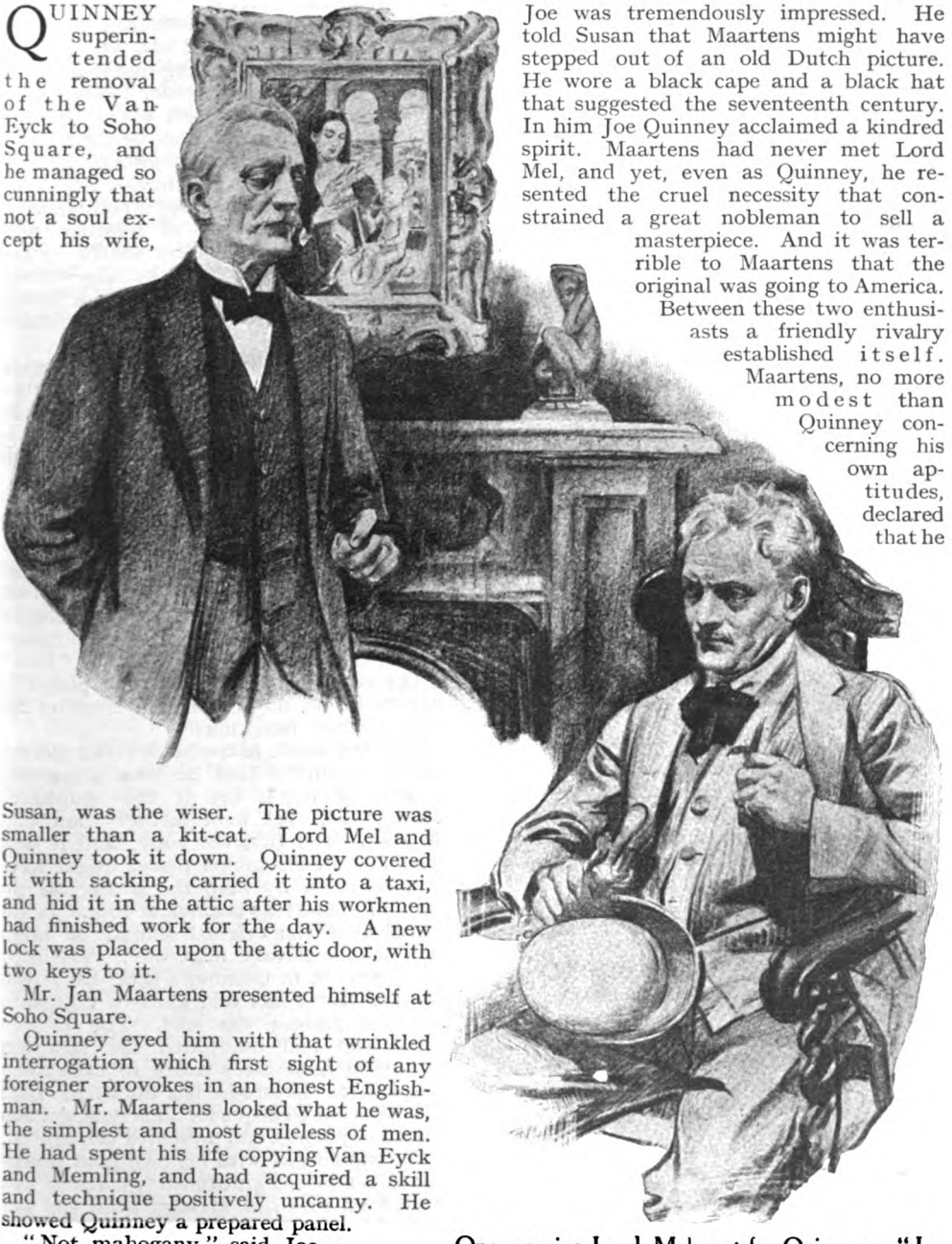
"Not mahogany," said Joe.

Maartens smiled.

"Die same as what Van Eyck use. My secret."

Quinney learned that he made his own pigments, grinding them himself even as the brothers Van Eyck had done more than five hundred years ago. He assured him that, under a strong lens, his brush-work was almost the same as the Master's. Joe was tremendously impressed. He told Susan that Maartens might have stepped out of an old Dutch picture. He wore a black cape and a black hat that suggested the seventeenth century. In him Joe Quinney acclaimed a kindred spirit. Maartens had never met Lord Mel, and yet, even as Quinney, he resented the cruel necessity that constrained a great nobleman to sell a masterpiece. And it was terrible to Maartens that the original was going to America.

Between these two enthusiasts a friendly rivalry established itself. Maartens, no more modest than Quinney concerning his own aptitudes, declared that he



One morning Lord Mel sent for Quinney. "I have decided to sell the Van Eyck," he said.

intended to reproduce the masterpiece so perfectly that few indeed would detect the difference between old and new. Quinney, for his part, was equally confident that his chosen workman would be as successful in copying the ancient frame.

Each went to work joyously.

SOMEWHAT to Quinney's surprise, Mr. Maartens "made a hit" with Susan. His courtesy, his gentle voice, his old-world face captivated Mrs. Quinney. He talked to her whilst he worked. She learned from him that he was a lonely old man. His wife and children were dead.

"I like him ever so much," she told Quinney. "Heart, Joe, is a bigger thing than Art."

"That's what I thought when I married you, old dear."

Such remarks never failed to soften Susan, but she remained obstinately of the opinion that thirty thousand pounds for a mere picture was a wicked price. That happened to be the precise sum which Lord Mel hoped to get for his most cherished possession.

The frame was finished first and compared with the original frame in the attic. Maartens congratulated Quinney. Quinney, quite as sincerely, congratulated Maartens.

And then a fly obtruded itself into the amber of their common satisfaction. Maartens said, nervously:—

"I lose my key yesterday, Mr. Quinney."

"What about it?"

"I stay at a hotel near Covent Garden. Gott! what a garden! But my compatriots go dere, ya. Maybe I am known to some of dem."

"What are you getting at, old chap?"

"Well"—he stared nervously at Quinney through his horn-rimmed spectacles—"you see, my friend, some bad fellow, *hein?* might guess dat Jan Maartens has left his country, which he loves, to—to make a copy of some great picture."

"Um! Yes—it's barely possible."

"To-day and yesterday somebody, so I think, follow me here."

"But your key. Are you speaking of the key to this attic?" Maartens nodded. "You mislaid it?"

"No, no. I am careful. I had hurried out to buy some flowers. I hurry back. No key! I go later to my dinner. I come back to my bedroom, and dere is die key. Queer, you say?"

"Nobody can know what we're up to."

Maartens shrugged a deprecating pair of shoulders.

Quinney went to his sanctuary and heartened himself up with a glass of brown sherry. He had suggested to his patron the propriety of insuring the Van Eyck against the ubiquitous burglar, but Lord Mel preferred, so he said, to run a negligible risk of robbery rather than provoke curiosity and importunity. Quinney, after protesting, acquiesced.

The brown sherry allayed uneasiness. Famous pictures, notably that of her Grace of Devonshire, have been stolen; but what thief can get rid of them? In what millionaire's gallery can they hang undetected?

After Maartens had gone, Quinney surveyed the attic with alert eyes. It could be entered through the door or through the window. The smallest of sweeps couldn't squeeze down the chimney. The stairs leading to it passed Quinney's bedroom.

Quinney looked out of window upon steeply sloping roofs, safely scaled by cats only. A burglar, entering by the window, would have to carry with him a ladder, which he would ascend at imminent risk of breaking his neck.

"No need to worry," muttered Quinney.

It occurred to him also that Mynheer Maartens might be followed by anybody. Apart from his mediæval cape and hat, he could hardly—as a "Beaver"—hope to escape notice.

Other matters engrossed his attention.

III.

LORD MEL saw the copy two days after it was finished. He came up from Melshire for that purpose. The original was lightly glazed, but Maartens had bought a sheet of thick plate-glass to give "tone" to the copy. Each picture was placed in its own frame, on an easel, in front of the window which faced north.

Lord Mel knew, of course, his own picture, but he admitted that he was astounded, as well he might be, at the counterfeit presentment. He went farther than this. He maintained that the copy, had it been hung in its accustomed place, might have been accepted by him, the owner, as the original. Maartens beamed at him. It was settled that the original should be taken back to the library next day. The copy would remain in Quinney's attic till it was wanted. Lord Mel told his two craftsmen that the picture was sold. The London agent who had negotiated the sale was coming to Lord Mel's house to take away the picture. Before he left the attic, Lord Mel wrote out a cheque for Maartens, guineas instead of pounds, and presented the copyist, at the same time, with his own gold pencil-case as a mark of gratitude. Maartens was much touched. Indeed, after Lord Mel had hurried away, the Dutchman shook his fist in the unseen face of the unknown purchaser; he cursed him in double Dutch;

he commended the Italian law which prohibits the exportation of works of art.

"Steady on, old chap!" said Quinney. "We can't have it both ways, can we?"

Jan Maartens wiped tears of indignation from his eyes. When Quinney was summoned below he left an unhappy man huddled up in a chair, glaring at the original, muttering in his own strange tongue.

Next morning Quinney took back the Van Eyck to Mel House. He said afterwards that he had no stomach to look at it. Lord Mel may have experienced the same heart-burning. He returned to Melshire, after instructing Quinney to introduce Maartens to his steward. He wished Maartens to overhaul other Dutch pictures which needed attention. Maartens accepted a job after his own heart. It was arranged between Quinney and the steward that Maartens should work in the library between the hours of ten and four.

IV.

THREE days later, in the afternoon of Wednesday, Quinney found the copy missing. He had seen it at midday. It had been taken out of the frame.

The same evening the Press published a garbled version of the robbery. The world was told that a Van Eyck had been stolen, and for twenty-four hours circumstantial evidence pointed to Maartens as the thief. He had been seen by Quinney's hall porter leaving the Soho Square establishment. He had come at one-fifteen, when Quinney's workmen were at dinner. He had passed through the shop, as usual, ascended to the attic, let himself in, presumably with his own key, and passed out again.

This information was gleaned by the police, who, much to Susan's indignation, invaded Quinney's premises, asking questions of all and sundry. Joe told an inspector that a copy had been stolen, doubtless in mistake for the original. It was ridiculous to suppose that Maartens would steal his own copy. More, Quinney learned from Lord Mel's steward that Maartens had been working from ten to four in the library. At the very hour when the copy was stolen the steward had taken some luncheon to the Dutchman. The thief, after obtaining an impression of the attic key, had cleverly impersonated the old man. Maartens was quite willing to make another copy. The police left Soho Square and retreated to Maartens's hotel in Covent Garden. Next day, all London roared with laughter over the blunder perpetrated by a burglar who didn't know the moon from cream cheese.

Meanwhile the question of painting another copy grew vexed. The Van Eyck had been taken from Mel House. It was boxed and ready for shipment to New York. Lord Mel, much excited, rushed up to town. Cables flashed between London and New York. Finally, the purchaser of the Van Eyck graciously accorded his consent to another copy being made provided extraordinary precautions against further robbery were exercised. The Van Eyck was to remain in the London agent's possession.

Maartens sent to The Hague for another panel.

Within a week the enterprising agent had placed the Van Eyck on public view. Thousands paid a shilling to see it.

And then Quinney received the shock of his life. Lord Mel came to him late in the afternoon. Quinney received his patron in the sanctuary. He noticed that his lordship was agitated.

"Joe—— ?"

"My lord—— ?"

"I have paid a shilling to see my own picture. It isn't *mine*. It's the copy. The thief collared the real Van Eyck."

Quinney came within an ace of fainting. His knees were as wax; his hands trembled; the world, as he knew it, seemed to be disintegrating.

"We must pull ourselves together, Joe. There's a humorous side to this. The experts have been spoofed! A triumph of the preconceived idea. They saw what they expected to see—a Van Eyck that has been in my family for generations. It's true they can't get close to the picture; they can't examine the back of it; and it's in the genuine frame. Now—what do you say?"

Quinney was beyond speech. Lord Mel continued lightly:—

"This looks like a case for Scotland Yard, but I haven't been there, simply because I have a warm regard for Maartens and a sincere affection for you, old fellow. The Yard would suspect both of you."

"Gosh!" exclaimed Quinney.

He lay back in his chair, thinking.

As before, when confronted by a serious emergency, fighting instincts asserted themselves. And he could see himself as an object of suspicion with clearest detachment. Both pictures had been in his possession. Maartens and he alone had access to them. Maartens had established an alibi.

Joe laughed, relieving the tension.

"By gum! my lord, I'm up against it."

"So am I. Scotland Yard," said Lord Mel, slyly, "is quite capable of thinking that you and I, Joe, are in collusion."

And at that my lord laughed.

"Dead game sportsman, you are," said Quinney, quite forgetting that he was addressing a marquess.

"Thanks, Joe; but what are we going to

do? Somebody may spot the copy. Somebody may smell fresh paint. There would be a rare hullabaloo. Anyway, I can't keep silent long. Meanwhile, the thief believes that he has stolen the copy."

"I wonder!"

"You question that?"

"A dirty dog must be the tool and accomplice of a big knave. I'm afraid that he has smelt old paint. And he's had a week's start. The police have treated this as a joke."

Lord Mel nodded.

"Have you told Maartens, my lord?"

"No—he's unhappy enough as it is."

Presently Lord Mel went away, but not to Scotland Yard.

V.

THAT night, after supper, Susan, the faithful consort of thirty years, divined that something lay heavy upon her lord's masterful mind. When Quinney lit a second cigar, having smoked the first feverishly fast, she said tenderly:—

"You're not fretting over that stolen copy, are you?"

"Yes, I am. I'd give fifty pounds to know where it is."

"The Dutchman took it."

Susan's intuitions had confounded Quinney more than once during their married life. He removed his cigar from his mouth and stared at her face, still pretty and beguiling.

Somewhat to Quinney's surprise, Mr. Maartens "made

"You come off it," he growled. "A man can't be in two places at the same time, Mrs. Smarty."

"He took it," persisted Susan, "because he's, like you, in love with things. Worshipper of painted images! Who else would want to steal a copy? What beats me is *why* he didn't take the original."

"Ho!" said Quinney, sitting bolt upright.

"I caught him on his knees in front of it. Idolatry!"

"What? You never told me."

"Do you tell me everything, as you used to, Joe? Not you. I say—he took it. Why? Because nobody else could have taken it."

"What price alibis, old dear?"

Susan retorted smartly:—

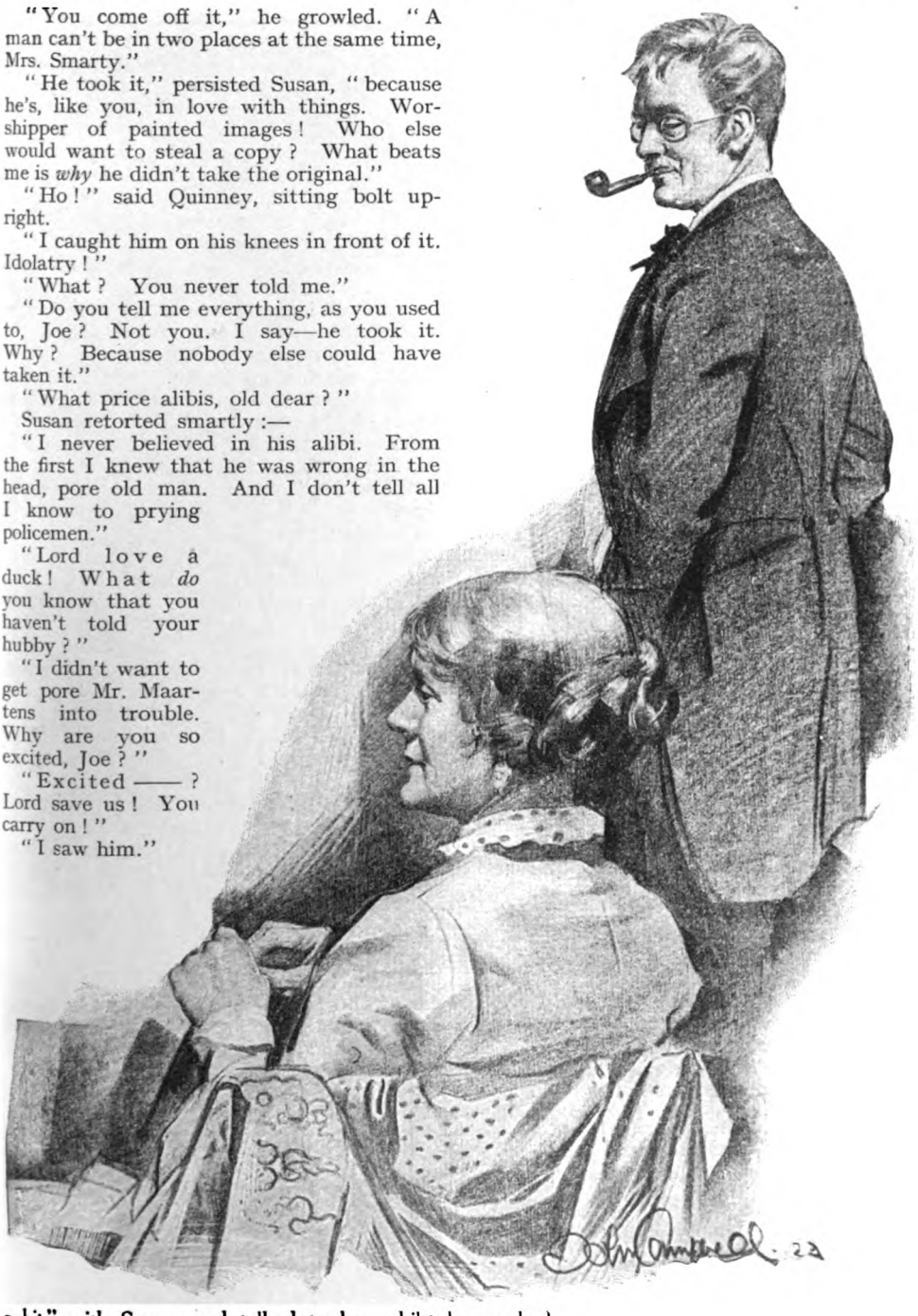
"I never believed in his alibi. From the first I knew that he was wrong in the head, pore old man. And I don't tell all I know to prying policemen."

"Lord love a duck! What *do* you know that you haven't told your hubby?"

"I didn't want to get pore Mr. Maartens into trouble. Why are you so excited, Joe?"

"Excited ——? Lord save us! You carry on!"

"I saw him."



a hit" with Susan, and talked to her whilst he worked.

"You saw the thief in white chin-fittings that rigged himself up to look like him."

"I trust my eyes *and ears*."

"And ears, hay?"

Susan ended triumphantly:—

"I know his funny dot-and-carry-one step on the attic stairs as well as I know yours. I know his nervous little cough.

I know the way he opens and shuts a door. Mr. Maartens was in the attic for just ten minutes, between one and two, last Wednesday week, him and nobody else."

"You *are* the limit," gasped Joe.

Susan surveyed him placidly.

"If he hadn't the right to take away his own copy, who has?"

"His copy?" shouted Quinney. "Lord Mel paid him one hundred guineas for that copy. It belongs to his lordship."

"What of it?"

"What of it? A man steals something belonging to another man, and you sit there darning my socks and ask—what of it?"

"I'm not one to impute evil," said Susan, hastily. "If Mr. Maartens stole that copy he did it for a good reason."

By this time Quinney was hopping about the room in his excitement.

"Good reason!" he howled. "You sit tight, Mrs. Compound-a-felony. Your friend, Mr. Maartens, didn't steal the copy; he stole the original—value *thirty thousand pounds*."

"Well, I never!" said Susan.

"What price Mr. Jan Maartens now?"

Susan replied demurely:—

"I still think he's a very nice old gentleman—wrong in the head, like all who set their affections on sticks and stones."

Quinney laughed. Perhaps what kept love for Susan ripe and mellow was her gift for exciting laughter.

"All right, Susie, but Lord Mel stands to lose thirty thou, and I——"

For the first time Susan betrayed real anxiety.

"Lor', Joe; this doesn't affect you?"

"My reputation is on the scrap-heap, dearie."

"But I know where the picture is."

"You tell me you *know* where it is?"

"I know where it must be."

"Where, Mrs. Sherlock Holmes?"

"In the attic."

"Gizzards and geysers! How do you know?"

"Because he had nothing in his hand when he came out of the attic. I was peeping through the door. Where are you off to, Joe?"

"Bless my stars! To the attic, of course. You traipse along, too."

VI.

As he raced up steep stairs to the attic, followed by Susan, Quinney remembered that, so far as he knew, Maartens had not been to Soho Square since the theft—if he had come then. His work at Mel House engrossed him. But he had left in the attic, with Quinney's permission, the paraphernalia of a painter—an easel, the colours he ground himself, the siccative oils and resins which the great Van Eyck had discovered, a much-stained smock of brown holland, and an ancient overcoat. At these objects Quinney stared impatiently.

Then a search began and ended—*pro tem.*

"It ain't here," snapped Quinney.

"Must be," repeated Susan.

By this time Quinney had peered up the small chimney, looked under a strip of carpet and into an empty cupboard. He opened the window and glanced along the lead gutter. He stamped on the bare boards, glaring at Susan, now truly terrified because it occurred to her that Joe might have to pay Lord Mel thirty thousand pounds!

"Not here, old 'ooman!"

"Must be," repeated Susan for the third time.

Crawling along the floor, nose in dust, Quinney examined each solid plank in turn, whereat Susan observed, derisively:—

"He was only here ten minutes. You couldn't budge one of those planks in an hour."

Quinney rose from his knees, snorted, and glanced at a smoke-begrimed plaster ceiling.

"Couldn't reach that without a step-ladder, could he?" murmured Mrs. Quinney.

The walls were bare. But at the farther end of the garret were two ancient oil paintings, portraits of Georgian ladies, shocking daubs, bought by Quinney because the frames were of wood. The ladies seemed to be simpering derisively at Quinney. Already he had looked behind them, but not at them.

Suddenly he remembered that he had given one of these pictures to Maartens, because the old gentleman had fancied the frame. Maartens had offered to buy it; he had been insistent about it. Why? For days he had not noticed either daub or frame. And—was this mere coincidence?—Maartens had offered to buy the picture after the incident of losing the key, after he had "planted," so to speak, in Quinney's mind the disturbing possibility of some rascal unduly interested in Mr. Jan Maartens's visit to England.

Quinney, like a hound that hits the line, darted at the picture. He gave tongue.

"By gum!"

The back of the canvas was not visible. A careful Dutchman had pasted a sheet of brown paper up to the edges of the stretcher.

"Who—whoop!"

Quinney tore off the brown paper and held aloft the Van Eyck panel.

He tore off the brown paper and held aloft the Van Eyck panel. It had been lying loose and snug between canvas and paper.

Quinney dropped the Van Eyck, hugged Susan, and waltzed her round the attic.

"Joe—*stop!*"

"Ain't going to stop."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," she panted. "Think of Lord Mel! Is he dancing?"

Joe stopped.

"Gosh! you're right. You nip down to the 'phone. Gerrard 096. Ask for his lordship. Say——! Wait a mo'. Wait! Yes, yes. Tell him the lost is found——"

"The lost is f-f-found," repeated Susan, breathlessly.

"Tell him to step up here instanter."

Susan protested.

"Speak to his lordship as if he were you——? Not me."

"Talk to him as if he was King George, old dear."

He pushed her towards the door. As she flitted out, nimbly enough, Joe turned, picked up the Van Eyck, and stared at the frame he had copied so successfully.

VII.

NEXT morning, at ten punctually, Mr. Jan Maartens entered Mel House. He glanced as usual at the big Rubens on the grand staircase as he removed his hat. Would Rubens have achieved such fame as a colourist if the brothers Van Eyck had never been born?

The house-steward showed him into the library and left him.

Maartens, as if he were in the chancel of a cathedral, moved softly and reverently across the thick carpet. He failed to notice that the big double doors at the north end of the room were not closed. Opposite to them was the chimneypiece above which had hung the Van Eyck. Fronting Maartens were tall windows.

He stood still, as if palsied. With a tremendous effort he staggered towards the chimneypiece, holding out his trembling hands. He could see nothing except the Van Eyck; he could hear nothing, except, possibly, the beating of his own heart. He fell on his knees before the picture.

The double doors opened. Lord Mel tiptoed across the carpet, followed by Quinney. Lord Mel placed his frail hand upon the shoulder of the stricken man.

"Well, Maartens——?"

Maartens collapsed. For many minutes he was unable to speak. When he did speak, slowly and haltingly, he was barely articulate. But Quinney, two hours later, transposed into nervous English, for the benefit of Susan, the sum and substance of what was said.

"The old gentleman *is* daffy. You were right about that, Susie. He's potty about his own work; and he's a raving lunatic when it comes to Van Eyck and Memling. He believed that his copy would spoof everybody, and, by gum, it has! He couldn't stick the idea of that picture leaving Europe. He intended to pass the rest of his life gloating over it in secret. At his death the truth would have been told, and everybody would admit that the work of Jan Maartens had been accepted by the world as the work of Jan Van Eyck."

"And the alibi?"

"He worked that to rights. His lunch was brought to him by the steward, who went downstairs for his own lunch. Maartens nipped out of the front door, leaving it ajar. He took a taxi to Soho Square. He had a roll of brown paper and a pot of gum. He did the trick and was back in the library without being missed. He rang the bell for the steward to take away the lunch at a quarter to two. And asked him the time o' day. I couldn't have done the thing neater myself. That's all."

"All?" repeated Susan, scornfully. "I'm a deal more interested in the old gentleman than I am in that ancient picture. This is another warning to you, Joe. There are things—*things*—in the National collections that you'd steal, if you were quite certain you wouldn't be found out."

"Susie——!"

"So don't you throw stones at pore Mr. Maartens. Is—is he going to jail?"

"Against public expediency, dearie," said Joe, quoting Lord Mel.

"Talk plain English, Joe."

"Mr. Maartens will go to—The Hague. Lord Mel and that tomfool who has been exhibiting a fake will exchange panels, not frames, on the strict Q.T."

"And my fifty pounds?"

"Your fifty pounds——?"

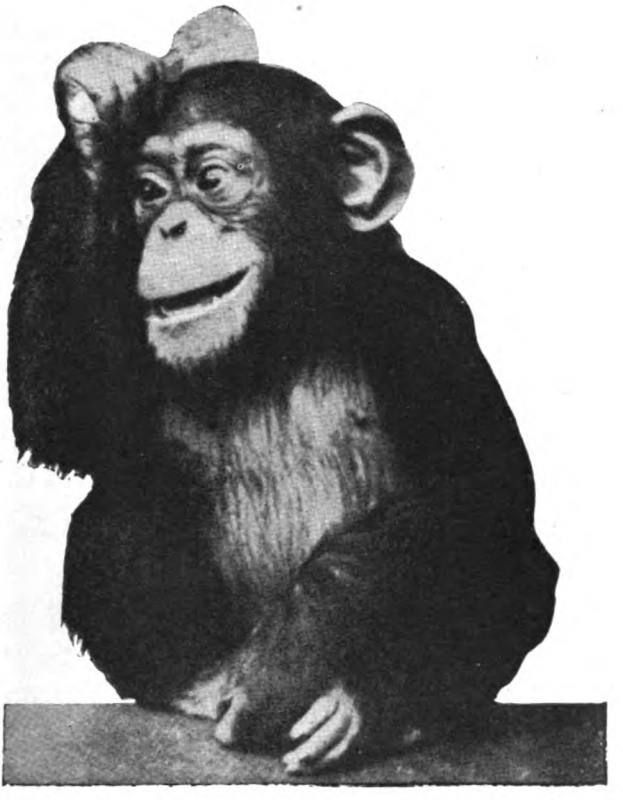
"You said you would give fifty pounds to anybody who told you where the picture was. *I told you.* I sha'n't spend the money on things, Joe. I shall give it to persons—my Waifs and Strays."

"What an old darling you are!" said Quinney.

APES AND THEIR WAYS

by
R. I. Pocock F.R.S.
(*Late Superintendent of the Zoological Society's Gardens*).

ILLUSTRATED FROM PHOTOGRAPHS by F. W. BOND



THE sense of the ludicrous in most of us is irresistibly stirred by the display of human behaviour by beasts or the utterance of human speech by birds. There is something absurdly incongruous in the combination. Hence the animals in menageries which make the strongest appeal to the average visitor out for entertainment are those which caricature or imitate mankind. It is for this reason that the most popular inmates of every zoological gardens are the apes and the monkeys, which, although essentially beasts in the ordinary sense of the word, are singularly, sometimes shockingly, human in their ways and character and appearance.

Two of the greatest favourites of this group in the collection in Regent's Park are Mickey, the chimpanzee, and Sandy, the orang-utan. Mickey came before my time, in 1898, and I have no clear recollection of him until he was seven or eight years old. But Mansbridge, his late head-keeper, told me that he was such a poor little hairless specimen when he arrived at the dock that he was thrown into the bargain as practically worthless when the society bought from his owner a fine big chimpanzee which came by the same boat. Mickey was not expected to live more than a few weeks; but Mansbridge was a first-rate coddler; and coddling was precisely what Mickey required. And so it came about that whereas the big chimpanzee, despite his more promising appearance, died not long after entering the Gardens, Mickey, the despised little brat, survived and completed his twenty-fifth year of residence in the Gardens last April.

To say that he has turned out a handsome, well-grown animal would be an absurd travesty of the fact. He is muscularly strong, has hardly ever had a day's serious illness, and is in a way surprisingly agile. I say "surprisingly," because no one would suppose from looking at him that he could do more than crawl. Yet when the spirit moves him he can traverse the floor of his cage with a swift kind of gallop, half shuffle, half dance, indescribably ludicrous to behold. He periodically indulges in these antics, bounding and whirling along, like a maniac letting off steam. The truth is that during his early years he suffered from some obscure osteological complaint, thought by some to be "rickets," and grew up a stunted dwarf, with bandy legs, a curved spine, and a face extraordinarily distorted by something that went wrong with his teeth and prevented the cutting of the second set. At all events, he has two great swellings on the muzzle in front of the eyes, rather like the bosses on the faces of some baboons; and these I believe to be caused by the roots

of the great upper canines still embedded in the bone. When I first knew him he had about two teeth, apparently of the first set, left, and these soon afterwards came out with their roots unabsorbed. One of them, when loose, used to trouble him at times, and when I said to him " Mickey, how is the tooth ? " he would put his finger in his mouth and pull back the gum, as if anxious for me to look at it. For many years he has been absolutely without teeth ; but he gets on very well without them, mainly on soft food, although he is capable of munching biscuits, pieces of apple, and other things equally hard. A nut is beyond the capacity of his gums, but I have seen him overcome the difficulty of the shell by cracking it between his upper jaw and the wirework of his cage.

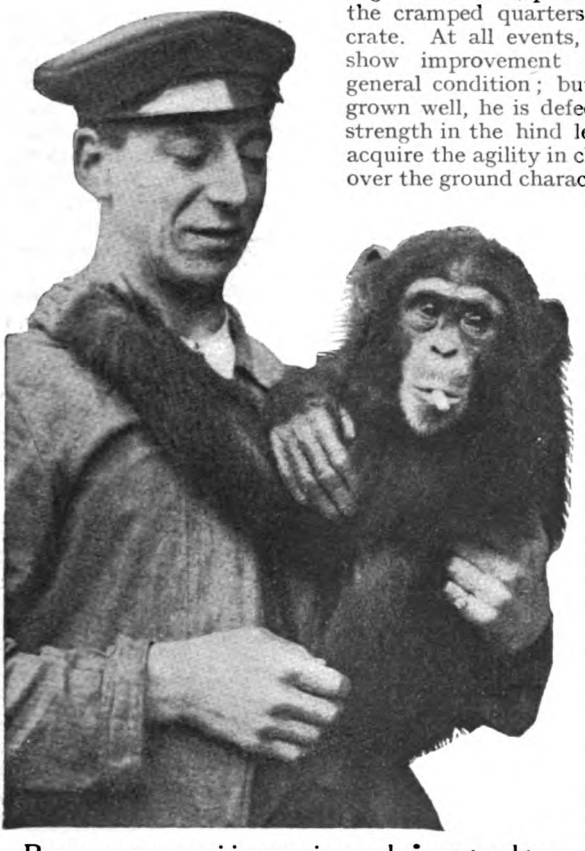
His emotions are difficult to understand. He used to be greatly disturbed by the appearance of a soldier in the old-fashioned scarlet uniform ; and " men of colour " always excite him. His attitude towards them is not like the fear of a small child or the curiosity of a grown person. It savours rather of the resentment a white man might feel towards a strange Negro coming into his room. Like other apes he is apprehensive of some sounds that he does not understand. I have seen him almost panic-stricken by the noises made by an unseen man repairing the roof of the Ape House. But his great aversion is a gun. When asked " Where's that gun, Mickey ? " he would begin to whimper and glance anxiously around, with the hairs of his body standing on end. I could never satisfy myself on what this fear rested, and used to wonder if perchance it was due to his recollection of a gunshot being the cause of his mother's death at the time of his capture in the West African forest. That may have been a factor in the case ; but Mansbridge attributed his fright to his seeing from the window of his house the late head-keeper, Thomson, shooting rats and sparrows. Possibly the sound of Thomson's gun kept alive the original impression stamped on his infant mind. However that may be, he was unmistakably terrified at the sight of the weapon brought into the house, and he had learnt to associate the name " gun " with the firearm in question. And I may here add that I have seen newly-imported baboons duck their heads and hold their arms before their faces when a walking-stick was shouldered and pointed at them, their behaviour forcibly suggesting the indelibility of the impression made upon them by being shot at when enjoying their wild freedom in the African hills.

Many a chimpanzee has come and gone during Mickey's sojourn in the Gardens ; but all had similar characteristics. Imported when quite young, they were taught by the keepers, for the amusement of visitors, to perform a few simple tricks like saluting, feeding from cups and spoons, putting keys into locks, or turning somersaults to order. With concentrated attention their education could have been carried much farther. Dressed in human costume, with boots, trousers, or petticoats complete, young chimpanzees have frequently been shown on the stage, and made to dance or ride bicycles, to sit patiently round a tea-table like schoolchildren awaiting their turn, or to strike matches and light cigarettes like little men. But simple as these performances appear, it is known that they can only be enforced by the sternest measures if, as often happens, the apes are not in the mood at the time to do what is required of them. A very promising specimen, called Percy, destined for the German stage, came into the possession of the Zoological Gardens in the autumn of 1914 as a result of the outbreak of the war. While still in Africa he had been taught a great variety of the usual tricks, and a large sum had been offered for him safely landed in Hamburg. But he got no farther than London. He was about five years old at the time, and was an

Mickey, who is a great favourite with the public, has been in the Zoo over twenty-five years.

extraordinarily docile and attractive little creature. But before the end of the war he became a martyr to rheumatism, which finally crippled him.

He was transferred to the nursery in the basement of the Ape House; but one night, owing to a dislodgment of soot in the furnace flue, the whole basement became permeated with carbon monoxide gas, and Percy and one or two baby chimpanzees were found in various stages of coma in the morning. With careful nursing they recovered from the immediate effects of the gas, and all did well except Percy, who thereafter was so hopelessly bedridden that it was considered the kindest course to put an end to his suffering with a dose of chloroform.



Percy, a very promising specimen who was taught a great variety of tricks, is here seen smoking a cigarette.

I have often been asked which of the two apes, the chimpanzee or the orang-utan, I consider the more intelligent. I do not think we have sufficient data to establish the point. Mr. Hornaday, the director of the New York Zoological Park, places the chimpanzee first. From my experience I should give my verdict in favour of the orang; but no doubt these two kinds of apes vary individually in that respect almost as much as human beings do, and large numbers would have to be subjected to similar tests before the average could be ascertained. At all events, no chimpanzee that has been under my care has acted in such a way as to suggest intelligence equal to that of Sandy, the orang-utan. This ape came to the society in 1905 as a present from the directors of the Botanical Gardens at Singapore, when they decided to abandon the exhibition of live animals. He had then been eight years in captivity in the East, and was probably about ten years old upon reaching London. He was considerably crippled on arrival, and could hardly do more than shuffle slowly about his cage. This was, perhaps, due merely to the cramped quarters of his travelling crate. At all events, he soon began to show improvement in activity and general condition; but although he has grown well, he is defective in muscular strength in the hind legs and will never acquire the agility in climbing or getting over the ground characteristic of the wild animal.

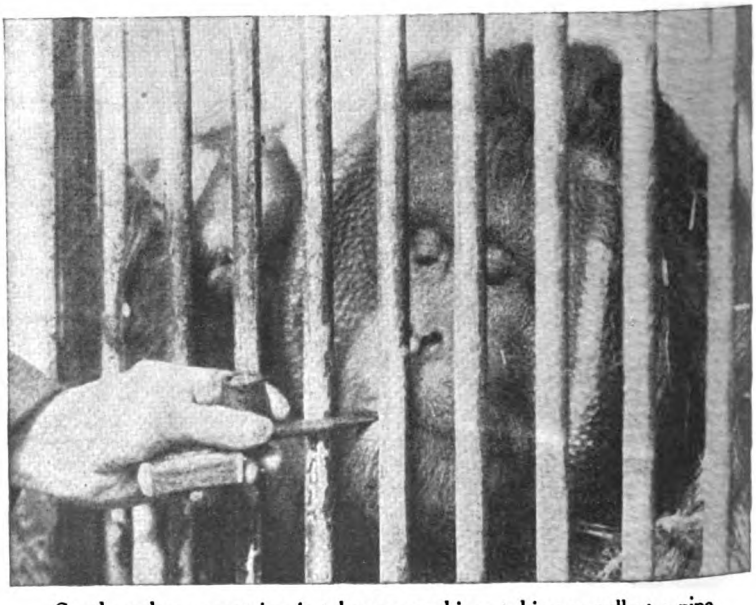
Sandy's great joy is tobacco-smoking, a taste he acquired in Singapore. He is an undemonstrative, imperturbable creature, but his eyes gleam with anticipated pleasure at the sight of a pipe; and if you give it him he will draw a great volume of smoke into his capacious mouth, retain it as long as his breath lasts, then exhale it in two jets from his nostrils like an inveterate cigarette-smoker. He will smoke cigars with equal enjoyment and satisfaction in a similar way. Such dissipations are allowed him now and again as a luxury; but he will amuse himself for an hour at a time in another way. On the hot-water pipes across the passages at the front and back of his cage are placed troughs containing water to keep the air moist by evaporation. The distance between the troughs and the bars of his cage is about four feet, and by thrusting his arms through he can reach the water with a piece of straw. It is interesting to see him selecting the straws from his litter. He seems to know to a nicety the approximate length required, and without trial will reject piece after piece, judging by his eye alone. He always chooses a piece with the ear on, guided apparently by the knowledge that the little extra weight at the end helps him to jerk it into the trough, and that the ear

Sandy, an inmate of the Zoo for eighteen years, is an orang-utan of exceptional intelligence.

supplies that orang-utans have the instinct, or the intelligence, to make use of implements to carry out a purpose they cannot perform with their hands alone. I have never seen any reason to think that chimpanzees possess that faculty. They will, it is true, put a key into a padlock as if to unlock it, but that is a question of imitating what they have seen their keeper do. But there is further evidence on this head in connection with the orang-utan. A fine male specimen, called Jacob, who lived in the Gardens from 1908 to 1916, was quite as intelligent as Sandy and used to reach water from the troughs in the same way. When the wire netting of his cage was under repair one day, the wireworker inadvertently left in the cage some pieces of stout wire, six inches or so in length. Jacob discovered them in the straw and made use of them as tools to loosen the wire netting from its attachment to the iron framework of his compartment. Nothing would induce him to part with them voluntarily, and he was too strong and formidable to allow them to be taken from him by force. It was too dark for him to work at night, but he was watched during the day, and one could not but admire the infinite patience he displayed in persevering with his arduous task. Having succeeded in getting a loose

soaks up and retains more water than the plain smooth stalk. When the end of the straw is wet, he withdraws it from the water and sucks it dry; and he will continue this occupation until tired of it. His behaviour does not appear to be prompted by thirst, because when so occupied he will reject water offered him in a cup to drink.

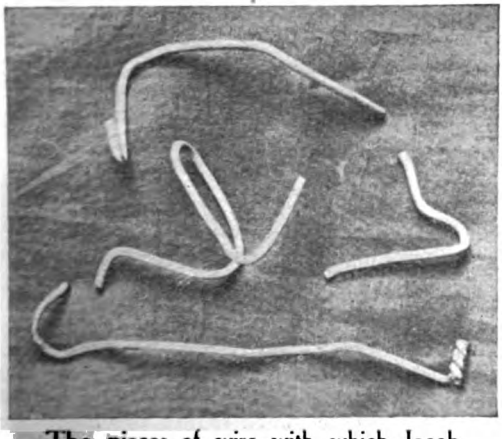
This method of amusing himself was his own invention; and the interest in the performance lies in the evidence it



Sandy, whose great joy is tobacco-smoking, taking a pull at a pipe.

end of the wire netting, he proceeded to unwind the meshes, pulling and pushing the wire with his powerful fingers, but always working it in the same direction so as to untwist it. He made several small holes in this way on successive days; but his efforts were always brought to naught before nightfall by the wireworker, who with his pliers speedily repaired the damage done; and Jacob was left safely imprisoned in his cage for the night. So at least it was thought. But about eleven o'clock one evening some keepers came to my house to tell me that while passing the Ape House a short time before they had heard a crashing of broken glass, coming apparently from one of the windows high up in the wall, and upon peering up in the dark found out the reason; they perceived a bullet-

Jacob, the orang-utan whose escape from his cage is described on this page.



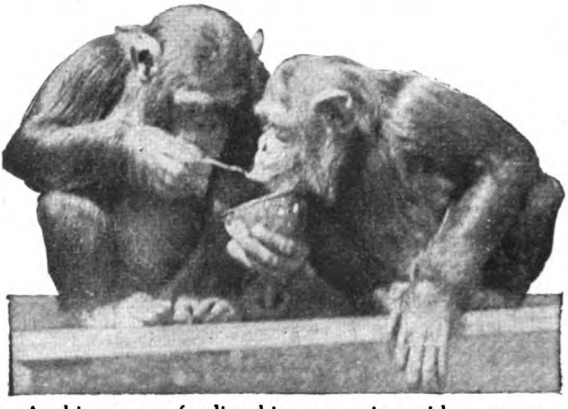
The pieces of wire with which Jacob effected his escape.

shaped head projecting over the edge of the parapet and silhouetted against the grey night sky. Rightly surmising that the head belonged to one of the inmates, they reported the matter to me, and we sallied forth in a body to see what could be done.

Entering the house, we found that Jacob had baffled us and escaped by making a large hole in the wirework of his cage. By means of a flower-pot he had then broken a pane of glass in one of the windows, and getting through it had made his way on to the roof. Ascending a ladder to find out what he was doing, we could just distinguish him sheltering in the big roof ventilator. It was clear that no effectual steps to capture him could be taken before daylight. He would very likely have evaded us in the dark, and might have got away to the houses in the Albert Road, and possibly have looked into or entered the open window of an occupied bedroom. Realizing in a measure the sensations of the occupant in such an eventuality, and appraising approximately the damages for shock the society might thereby incur, I decided that we must at all costs prevent Jacob from coming to the ground and making off. We therefore patrolled the house all night, anxiously waiting for dawn. We caught sight of him now and again and he was not altogether idle. He passed from the roof of the house to a tree near at hand, as we learnt by the cracking of the branches; but what he was busying himself about did not transpire till the light came. We then saw that he had built for himself a nest by twisting and twining the branches together, as is the custom with wild orang-utans when they retire for the night. Although he had been many years in captivity, his instinct to make himself an arboreal bed had not died.

With the arrival of the rest of the keepers in the morning, active steps were taken to effect his recapture. Supplying several of

the men with ropes and nets and stationing them at various points round the house, I sent one of them up to the roof with a "Minimax" Fire Extinguisher, which throws a jet of water like a seltzogene, with orders to him to make use of it if the ape refused to move. For a time he sat imperturbably regarding the keeper, wondering apparently what was going to happen next. But the moment the jet was turned on him his composure fled, and, hurrying to the parapet, he scrambled and slipped to the ground by means of a rain-water pipe and, eluding a keeper at the bottom, made for the window he had broken, and, climbing up it, passed into the house and thence into his cage by the hole through which he had escaped. That was the last of Jacob's escapades. The wire netting of his cage was replaced with iron bars fit to hold a lion; and for the rest of his life he was kept a close prisoner. In conclusion I may add that the nest remained for a few years as a memento of the adventure, until finally it was blown away by a storm of wind; and, curiously enough, although the ape had been confined for several years in an artificially-warmed house, he never seemed one whit the worse for being exposed for eight or more hours to the cold of a foggy night in November.



A chimpanzee feeding his companion with a spoon.

But in some respects the most interesting ape ever exhibited in the Gardens was the ill-fated John Daniel, called John for short. Not that his behaviour was more human or his intelligence more acute than those of many chimpanzees and orang-utans. Interest in him rested mainly on the rarity of the public exhibition of apes of his kind. For some reason we do not understand, gorillas, unlike other apes, are intolerant of the ordinary methods of captivity in Europe and seldom live more than a few months. They do not appear to be constitutionally more delicate; but as a rule they are passively resentful of man's control and sullenly unresponsive to his overtures of friendship. Their unhappiness reacts upon their health, reducing to a minimum their powers of resisting disease. That is probably the explanation of the failure to keep these apes, which, with one or two exceptions, has been the melancholy experience of all who have bought them.

John was one of the exceptions above referred to. He was imported in August, 1918, and lived in London until March, 1921. I saw him the day after his arrival, and was at once impressed by the great contrast between his liveliness and docility and the listless lethargy and moroseness of newly-imported gorillas I had previously seen. From inquiries into his antecedents to ascertain the reason for this, I learnt that he was captured as a tiny baby and suckled and tended by a Negress, thus becoming at an early age habituated to human society. This was no doubt in a measure the secret of his future well-being. He was adopted by a lady, who kept him in her house in Sloane Street, treating him just like a child. He responded in a marvellous way to her kindness, seldom gave much trouble by displays of temper, and, being supplied with food in variety and plenty to suit his capricious appetite, throve beyond all expectations. He was taught to be perfectly clean, was provided with an ordinary bed, and with a young boy as a constant nursery companion.

During the summer months of the two years he was in London he spent four days a week at the Zoological Gardens, making the journey to and fro in a taxicab, and was shown to the public in one of the large outside cages of the Lion House, where his amusing gambols with his boy friend and his human behaviour, both innate and imitative, entertained crowds of visitors by the hour together. But the constant attention he exacted and the cost of his keep, including the hire and food of his attendant, proved unfortunately beyond the resources of his owner. So John was sold to an American. Caged in a big crate, in charge of his new owner, who knew nothing of his temperamental peculiarities, John refused to take food on the journey, and reached New York in no state to resist the rigours of an American April. He got ill, and, although his former mistress was cabled for and started her journey to the States, she arrived too late to save her pet from the attack of pneumonia that killed him.

TETHERSTONES

by

ETHEL M. DELL

ILLUSTRATED BY
P. B. HICKLING

PART III.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PERFECT GIFT.

THE thing was done. Frances stood alone in the old ivy-covered porch looking out into the faint starlight and asked herself how she had come to do it. It had been the impulse of the moment, and she well knew that if she had taken time to consider she would never have acted upon it. But a power that was infinitely greater than herself had urged her, and she had had no choice.

Now it was over. The inspiration had departed, and she waited with a certain chill apprehension for the coming of the man she loved. He generally smoked his pipe upon the porch when the day's work was done, and evidently Roger expected him to-night; for he shared her vigil, alert and friendly, his head within reach of her hand.

Ah! His step at last! She turned with a hard-beating heart and met him face to face.

He came to her and paused. "Shall we go into the garden?" he said. His voice was low, constrained. She turned mutely, and they passed down the winding path between the hollyhocks and sunflowers, side by side. The silence widened between them—became a gulf. He spoke at last.

"Frances!"

She paced on as though some remorseless Fate compelled. She knew then—it seemed to her that she had known all along—that the gulf was such as could not be bridged.

She answered him with absolute steadiness. "You needn't say any more. Let us go back."

He made a gesture with one hand that was almost violent. "It isn't always possible—to go back," he said.

"It is quite possible in this case," she said quietly. "Perhaps it will make matters easier if I tell you that I found out by accident some time ago that Maggie and Oliver were contemplating this step, and my sympathies have been entirely with them all through. I may be very presumptuous, but I can't stand by and see a great wrong done without making a very great effort to avert it. I have made my effort, and, whether successful or not, I have at least managed to prevent your acting in this matter without consideration. That is all I have to say."

She had lifted her banner bravely, masking her own humiliation and his anguish of spirit also. For herein, it seemed to her, lay salvation for them both.

He spoke in answer, his voice very quiet and sombre, with something of the old iron ring. "What do you want me to do?"

They reached the end of the walk, and she turned. Her agitation was wholly past, but her heart felt deadly cold within her.

"I want you," she said, "to try to understand that Maggie and Oliver have

Copyright, 1923, by Ethel M. Dell.

done no wrong, and to treat them with kindness."

"Is that all?" he said.

She did not understand his tone. "Is it too much to ask?" she said.

"No, it is very little—less than nothing, Do you think I care a damn what happens to either of them now?" His voice shook a little.

She turned her face towards him as she walked. "Yes, you do care," she said. "And that's why it isn't easy. But, Arthur, listen! There is no one on this earth who has the shadow of a right to interfere between a man and a woman who love each other. When I say love, I don't mean the mere physical attraction which so many mistake for love. I mean that holy thing, the love of the spirit, which nothing can ever change or take away. That is too sacred to be tampered with, and no third person should ever presume to touch it. It comes from God, and it should command our utmost reverence—even our homage."

She spoke very earnestly, for somehow, in spite of that terrible coldness at her heart, it seemed essential that he should see this thing with her eyes. It lay with her—she knew it lay with her—to save him from committing a great wrong, and to avert another sorrow from Tetherstones.

Arthur spoke at last. "Are you suggesting that they should go on exactly as if this had not happened? If my father came to know of it—it would drive him crazy."

"Your father need not know," she said. "He is an old man. It rests with you, not with him."

"Ah!" He stood still suddenly. "That's true. He can't live for ever. How many years have I told myself that, and yet I always forget it! Frances!" His voice thrilled suddenly, and then as suddenly he stopped himself. "No! I won't say that to you. I'll say just this. I see your point, and—I'll act on it if I find I can. Does that satisfy you?"

"Thank you," she said.

"Don't!" he said sharply, and swung round to go on. "Don't ever thank me! Just—believe in me—if you can!"

"I can," she said. "And I do."

They came out upon the path that wound about the dewy lawn, and walked back along it in silence.

CHAPTER XII.

THE PARTING.

"I'LL never forget what you've done for us," said Maggie. "And I'm very sorry you're going." She spoke with great earnestness, but the lilt had come back to her voice and the light to her eyes. She held Frances' hand very tightly between her own. "You'll come back some day?" she said.

"I shall certainly come back to the moors," Frances said, "to make my sketches. I am going to town now to try and sell them."

Maggie responded warmly to Frances' embrace, and returned to her butter-making with a song on her lips and gladness in her eyes.

"Yes, I should just think we are grateful," said Oliver, as he followed Frances out. "Arthur has been as decent as he knows how, and it's all thanks to you. Hope you'll make a match of it before long, Miss Thorold, when better times come. You won't want to wait as long as we did."

They all treated her thus, as if her marriage to Arthur were a foregone conclusion, cheerily disregarding the fact that neither she nor Arthur had given them any justification for so doing. They had, in fact, barely seen one another since that night in the garden, now two days past; and she had even begun to wonder if he would let her go without a word of farewell.

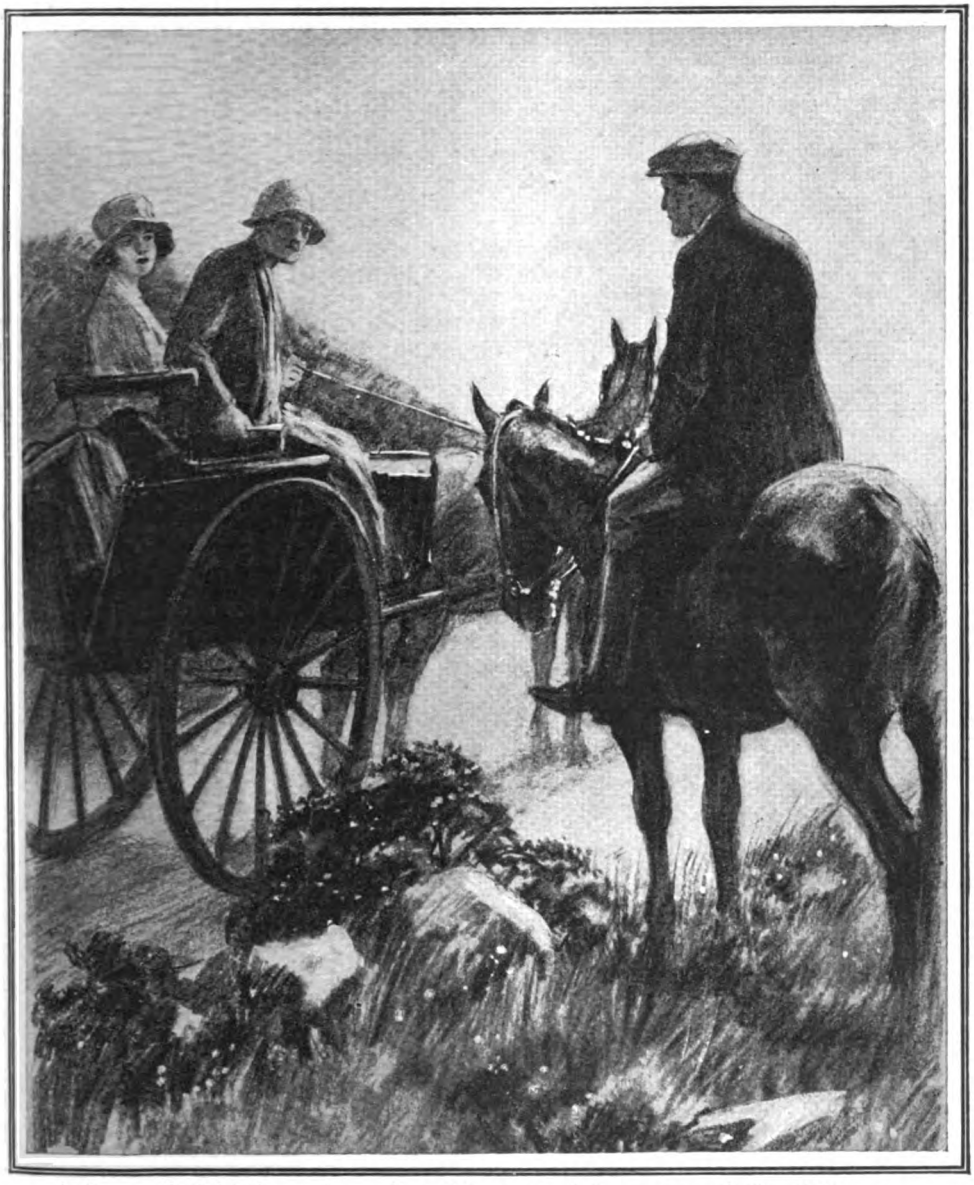
She had taken leave of everyone else save Oliver, who was to drive her to the station, and time was too short for lingering. She gave up hope at last, as she climbed into the cart.

She had said to Maggie that she expected to be in town for but a few days, but a strong conviction was upon her that her absence would be much longer than this. She even wondered if she would ever return.

Rounding the curve of a hill, they came at length within sight of the spot where she and Roger had sat together on that summer morning that seemed so long ago, and she had first seen Roger's master. Vivid as a picture actually before her eyes came the memory of that day, of the solitary horseman riding in the blinding sunlight, of the brief incident that had been their first introduction. She remembered her indignation—her sweeping condemnation of the man. But he had done worse things since, infinitely worse. Did she condemn him now? As if in answer, another memory smote her—the memory of this man bowed to the earth by a burden too great to be borne—the dumb agony of which she had been a witness—and his tears—his tears!

Her own eyes suddenly swam in them. She turned her face away. She must not break down now. She must not.

Some seconds passed before she could command herself to look again. They were nearing the bend in the road by which she and Roger had sat.



Arthur walked his horse forward as Oliver reined in to a standstill. "You can ride my animal back," he said. "I will take Miss Thorold to the station."

"Hullo!" said Oliver, suddenly.

She started. "What is it? Ah!"

A great wave of feeling, tumultuous, overwhelming, surged through her and she could say no more. Arthur was waiting on his horse, motionless as a statue, at the very spot that meant so much to her. He walked his horse forward as Oliver reined in to a standstill.

"You can ride my animal back," he said. "I will take Miss Thorold to the station."

To Frances he said nothing, and she attempted no word of greeting, even when he mounted to the seat beside her.

A hasty farewell to Oliver, the starting forward of the cob, a cheery bark from Roger scudding in front, and they were rounding the bend of the road, and alone. The moor stretched all about them like a wilderness.

Arthur spoke at last. "Why are you going?"

His voice was quiet; it held no special

thrill of interest. She even wondered as she made reply if he were greatly interested.

"It is better for me to go," she said. "I am going to take up work in earnest. I have had some encouragement. Several of my sketches have been bought."

"And if you succeed, that will bring you back?" he said.

She hesitated. His tone told her so little.

"It might," she said at length.

He drove on for some distance in silence. Then, with a restraint so evident that she could not fail to realize that he was putting strong force upon himself, he said, "I hope you will succeed. I hope you will make your fortune. It's a difficult world, but there are always some lucky ones. You may be one of them. In any case, whether you are or not, may I give you one word of advice?"

"What is it?" she said.

He answered her briefly, with a certain recklessness that somehow hurt her. "Forget you ever met me! It's no good—no good! Don't weight yourself with a burden that can only handicap you. If it's your fate, as well as mine, to grind your bread from stones, you'll need all your strength to do it. People like you and me can't afford to waste any time over—dreams."

He cut the horse a savage flick over the ears with the last word, and they went forward on a downward slant at a startling pace.

Not till they had reached the outskirts of Fordestown and the grey moors were left behind did he speak again, and then it was to say, in his customary clipped style, "We'll not make a tragedy of this. Life's too short. It's just good-bye and good luck! And that's all."

She forced herself to smile. "Except many, many thanks!" she said.

They finished the journey in silence. He did not so much as help her to descend. A porter came for her baggage, and at the last moment she stood on the path, looking up at him.

"Good-bye!" she said.

He looked down at her, his face like an iron mask. "Good-bye—and good luck! You haven't any time to spare."

He did not see the hand she began to offer, and it fell instantly. He touched his cap with his whip and lifted the reins. In another moment he was driving swiftly out of the yard.

She turned into the station with a curious sense of groping her way, and heard the porter's cheery voice at her shoulder. "It's all right, miss. You've got ten minutes to spare."

Ten minutes to spare! And then to take up the burden of life again!

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE LAND OF EXILE.

LONDON and a cold grey pall of fog! Frances looked forth from the carriage-window and suppressed a shiver. The grim ugliness of the great buildings that bordered the line seemed to lay a clammy hand upon her.

The autumn day was fading into twilight, and a dreary drizzle had begun to descend from the smoke-laden sky. She saw the gleam of it on the platforms as the train ran into the teeming terminus. And the spectre at her elbow drew closer. This was the land of exile.

She shook herself free, summoning to her aid that practical spirit which had stood her in such good stead in the old days of her slavery. She had made her plans, and it now remained for her to carry them out. With the money that Rotherby had sent for her sketches, she had enough to provide for that night at an hotel, and in the morning she was determined to find a cheap lodging where she could remain pending the settlement of the business that had brought her thither. Beyond that her plans were vague, but if the matter went favourably she hoped to leave London again immediately. She had an almost unbearable longing to turn and go back whence she had come. And then suddenly a voice spoke at her side, greeting her, and she looked round with a start.

"Didn't you expect me?" said Rotherby.

He smiled his welcome in the glare and noise of the great station, and two utterly antagonistic sensations possessed Frances at the sight of him—a feeling of dread and a feeling that was almost gladness. Little as she had desired to see him, the unexpected appearance of a familiar face in all that host of strangers sent a quick thrill of relief through her.

She smiled back at him, and after a moment gave him her hand. "I never expected you. What made you come?"

He laughed with a hint of exultation.

"You said you were coming," he said.

"Yes, but I never said the train."

He laughed again. "There was no need. Come along! Any luggage? I've got a car waiting."

She could not refuse, but she made her acceptance of his escort as business-like as possible. Not for worlds would she have had him know that any company just then was preferable to that of the spectre of her desolation that stalked so close behind.

They went into the hotel, and she booked a room for the night, Rotherby standing by her side, amused, not, it seemed, greatly interested, until the business was accomplished.

Then, as she turned, he became at once alert and ready. She thought the cynical lines were more deeply marked than ever about his mouth and eyes, but his smile was wholly friendly.

"Look here!" he said. "You must dine with me, and we'll do a theatre to-night. You're looking like the maiden all forlorn, though I'm relieved to see you've left the cow behind! I'll be round about seven. Will that do?"

She hesitated. "Do you know, I think I would rather have a quiet talk with you somewhere?" she said, with something of an effort. "I want to hear all there is to hear—about my work."

"Oh, there's plenty of time," he said. "As a matter of fact, the dealer chap isn't in town at the moment. I heard on the 'phone this morning. He'll soon be back, though, so you needn't be anxious. Now, what about this theatre? You'll come? It'll pass the time away."

It was in her mind to refuse. She would have preferred to refuse. But in the end she accepted. Perhaps it was the dread of a long evening of solitary speculation and its attendant misgivings that actuated her; perhaps his insistence weighed with her; or perhaps like a child she was overwhelmed by the sheer loneliness of her position. Whatever the motive, she yielded, and, having yielded, she thrust all regrets away.

SHE parted from Rotherby in the vestibule of the hotel and went up to her room. They were to meet again in little more than an hour, and she spent the time in a feverish effort to banish thought and to banish also that appearance of forlornness of which he had jestingly spoken.

She was very tired, but she would not own it, and when she met him again she had captured that reserve of strength which dwells at the back of jaded nerves, and an almost reckless charm was hers.

He gave her flowers, carnations and lilies, and she pinned them at her breast, revelling in their sweetness, exotic though she knew them to be. He took her to a restaurant, and the feeling of unreality followed her thither, throwing a strange glamour over all things. He did not again taunt her with being forlorn; for she held herself like a queen, and not even the simplicity of her attire could make her insignificant.

"Gad!" he said to her once. "How wonderful you are!"

And she uttered a little laugh that surprised herself. "It is all make-believe," she said.

He did not ask her to explain, but his eyes followed her perpetually with a kindling flame which mounted steadily higher, and when they left the table his hand closed for a moment upon her arm.

She shook it off with a laugh and a shrug. "Every game has its rules," she said.

He laughed also, answering her mood. "Every woman makes her own," he said.

They went out into the gleaming streets and entered the waiting car. The unaccustomed luxury was like a dream to Frances. It was no longer an effort to put the past away from her. It had sunk of itself into the far dim distance.

The pain at her heart had wholly ceased, and she wondered a little, barely realizing that she had stilled it temporarily with this anæsthetic of unreality. But a subconscious dread of its return made her steep herself more and more deeply in its oblivion. After all, to whom did it matter except herself? This man with his cynical eyes was too experienced a player to be made a loser in one night. And she had so little left to lose.

She sat in a box with him at the theatre, and though she quickly absorbed herself in the play, she was aware of his undivided attention from the beginning.

It even exasperated her at last, so that she turned to him after the first act with a movement of impatience. "Does it interest you so little," she said, "that you can't even be bothered to glance at the stage?"

"I have seen it already three times," he made answer, "and I am more interested at the present moment in watching the effect it has upon you."

She uttered a laugh, but the words gave her an odd feeling of shock. The play was a fashionable one, but though it compelled her deepest interest, it held moments of disgust for her as well.

"I should never want to see this more than once," she said, at the end of the second act.

Whereat he laughed. "Your education has been neglected," he said. "We all think like this nowadays. The puritanical atmosphere of Tetherstones has spoilt your taste."

She was silent. Somehow the very word sent a pang to her heart.

He leaned slightly towards her, looking

at her. "Tell me about your sojourn at Tetherstones!" he said. "Were the farm people decent to you? Were you happy there?"

There was a slighting note in his voice that she found intolerable. She turned deliberately and met his look.

"You know the Dermots," she said. "You know quite well that they are not just—farm people. Why should you conceal the fact?"

He made a careless gesture. "I know that one of them shot me in mistake for a rabbit that night I waited for you," he said. "I was never more scared in my life. That was the son, I presume? Did he ever mention that episode to you?"

"Never," she said.

"No? Perhaps he wasn't very proud of it. Perhaps he realized that the rabbit fallacy wouldn't carry him very far in a court of law. I fancy he imagined that I was poaching on his preserves." Rotherby spoke with a sarcastic drawl. "Very unreasonable of him, what?"

She felt the burning colour rise in her face under his eyes, and she averted her own. "Not being in his confidence, I really can hardly give an opinion," she said.

"Oh, you're not in his confidence?" said Rotherby. "Somehow I didn't think you were, or you would hardly be so ready to take up the cudgels in his defence. He's a curious fellow. I knew him years ago. He had brains as a young man, then somehow he got touched in the upper storey and got condemned to the simple life. That was how he came to take up farming. An awful blow to the old man, I believe. I heard he was never the same again afterwards. That is about as far as my information takes me. I must admit that from a personal point of view I am not vastly interested in the family. Did you find them interesting?"

"They were kinder to me than I can possibly say," Frances said.

Again she was conscious of the pain she had stifled waking within her. Again she felt the chill presence of the haunting spectre. Then Rotherby's voice came to her again, and she turned almost with relief.

"They were decent to you, were they?" he said. "I presume that was why you went back to them from Fordestown?"

She thrust her pain away out of sight of his mocking eyes. "No," she said, quietly. "I went back to be with the little girl before she died. She wanted me."

He gave a slight start. "What? The blind child that used to run about the lane? Is she dead? What from?"

"She was very fragile," Frances said, and instinctively she spoke with reverence. She had a fall which caused an abscess at the base of the brain, affecting the spine. The doctor had always known it might happen at any time. She didn't suffer—dear little soul."

"A tragic family," commented Rotherby, and dropped into silence.

He leaned back in his chair with his face in shadow, and for a space she felt that his attention was no longer focused upon her.

The curtain went up, and she jerked herself back to her surroundings. She tried to immerse herself anew in the play, but her interest was gone. The glamour had faded, and she knew that she was terribly, overwhelmingly tired. A desire for solitude came upon her, and with it, inseparable from it, an intolerable sense of exile, a longing that was almost anguish for the peace of the open moors, for the scent of the bog-myrtle, and the rain. She closed her eyes, and drew her memories about her like a mantle.

CHAPTER II.

THE NIGHTMARE.

SOMEONE was speaking to her. A hand touched her. She looked up with a start.

Rotherby was leaning over her. His eyes met hers closely, lingeringly, with a caress in them which her tiredness barely comprehended.

"How tired you are!" he said. "Shall I take you home?"

Home! For a few moments her weary brain clung piteously about the word. Then the pressure of his hand brought swift awakening. She sat up with a jerk.

"Oh, is it over? Yes, I am very tired. Forgive me! Let us go!"

His hand still held her. He slipped it under her elbow, helping her to rise.

She got up quickly, and freed herself. He put her cloak about her in silence. They passed out of the box into the crowd that filled the corridor.

"It's pouring with rain," said Rotherby, as they emerged into the vestibule. "Wait while I get the car!"

He left her, and she took her stand at a corner of the steps, idly watching the press of people that thronged past her. A man on the pavement below her, wearing an ulster with a cap drawn down over his eyes, evidently waiting for a conveyance, caught her passing attention because the set of his shoulders was somehow reminiscent to her of the lonely horseman who had awaited her coming on the moor, but she was too apathetic to bestow more than a cursory glance upon any, and she shrank at the moment with something like panic from all things that might pain her. She was too tired to endure any more that night.

A man on the pavement below her, wearing an ulster with a cap drawn down over his eyes, caught her passing attention.

Out of the press of hurrying people Rotherby detached himself and came to her. "It's all right. Take my arm! The car is just here."

She obeyed him, for the throng was great, and her only desire to escape the vortex of humanity and find the rest she so sorely needed. He piloted her through the crowd. For a few seconds she felt the rain beating upon her uncovered head, and then she was sunk upon the cushions in the darkness of the car with Rotherby beside her.

The car slid on through the night. They turned out of the glaring streets, and in the dimness Frances closed her eyes again. She did not want to talk; and Rotherby's mood seemed to coincide with hers, for he sat in utter silence by her side.

She was hardly aware that the car had stopped when, suddenly, he spoke. "You'll come in here for a few minutes? I'll tell the man to wait."

She roused herself. "In where?"

He was opening the door. "It's a half-way house where you can get some supper. I have ordered it specially for you."

"Supper!" She echoed the word, slightly startled. "Oh, really I don't want any. I would rather go straight back."

He was already out of the car. He stood in the doorway, laughing. "Please don't keep me here in the rain to argue! Let's do it inside! I can't let you go supperless to bed. It's against my principles."

He took her hand with the words, and his own had an imperative touch to which she yielded almost before she realized it.

He spoke a word to the man, and then took her arm and led her swiftly up some steps to a lighted portico. They were actually inside before Frances found her breath to speak again. "What is this place?"

"It's an hotel of sorts," he answered, lightly. "I hope it meets with your approval. It's somewhat after the French style. Come up in the lift!"

She went with him, still possessed by that feeling of unreality which had held her tired senses in thrall throughout the evening. The flowers at her breast were crushed and faded, but the scent of them had all the sweetness of a dream.

She passed out of the lift with Rotherby, and he unlocked a door that led into a tiny hall.

"Take off your cloak!" he said; then, as she fumbled, unfastened it himself and slipped it from her shoulders.

She felt his eyes upon her again, and was stabbed, as a dreamer is sometimes stabbed, by a curious feeling of insecurity. Then he had turned away, and was taking off his own hat and coat.

He closed the door by which they had entered and she heard the snap of a patent lock. "We don't want anyone else in," he said.

She paused. "But isn't it public? I thought you said it was an hotel."

He opened another door, and switched on a light that showed her a luxurious red-curtained apartment, with a polished table spread with refreshments of all kinds, and an electric stove that burned with a hot glow before a deep settee.

"This isn't public," he said. "It belongs to me."

She stood staring at him. "I—don't understand. You said—you did say—it was a public place?"

He smiled his scoffing smile. "Did I? I don't seem to remember it. It doesn't matter, does it? Sit down and have something! I prepared this as a little surprise, my Circe. You're not vexed?"

"Vexed!" she said, and paused, considering. "But—it's so extraordinary. I never dreamed——"

"No?" he said. "Well, you've been dreaming hard enough all the evening, anyway. Come, sit down! Sit down and let's enjoy ourselves! There's no law against that, is there? Let's see if I can open this champagne!"

HE proceeded to open it, and she watched him pour it foaming into two glasses on the table. The feeling that she had in some fashion been tricked was gaining ground with her, and yet in his careless demeanour she could detect no reason for alarm. He so evidently regarded the whole affair as a joke.

He turned round to her suddenly. "I say, don't look so shocked! There really is no need. You can always marry me afterwards, you know, if you feel so disposed. In fact, I think you are practically committed to that, so let's make the best of it!"

She saw herself helpless as a prisoner chained to a rock, but superbly she gathered her strength to meet the situation. She faced him like a queen.

"You have made a mistake," she said. "Let me go!"

He straightened himself sharply. She saw an ugly look cross his face; then again, carelessly, he laughed.

"Do let's have supper first!" he said. "We can talk afterwards for any length of time. I am sure you will find that sound advice. A good meal is always a help."

She stood motionless, her eyes unwaveringly upon him. "Let me go!" she said again.

He came to her then, and though the smile was still upon his face, she knew that, like herself, he was braced for battle.

"Why this tragic attitude?" he said. "And to what end? Don't spoil the occasion, my Circe! We are going to enjoy ourselves to-night."

She flung down the gauntlet with a supreme disregard of consequences. "You hound!" she said.

He shrugged his shoulders. "I like you for that. Yes, I am a hound, but I don't appreciate an easy prey. I'll conquer you now I've got you. But I'm in no hurry. Sit down and let's talk it over!"

Somehow that weakened her more than any violence. His utter assurance, his easy acceptance of her contempt, his almost philosophical attitude in the matter, all made her realize the hopelessness of her position. He had deliberately trapped her and he was not ashamed that she should know it. She stood before him speechless.

"That's better," he said. "You're getting a grasp of the situation, bringing that business-like mind of yours to bear upon it. Now listen to me! I love you. I can't tell you why, but I do. I've always wanted you, and I made up my mind a long while ago that I would have you. We began well, and then you broke away. But you won't break away this time. You belong to me, and I am going to enforce my claim. Is that quite clear?"

"You have no claim," she said, through white lips.

She saw his face harden. "A matter of opinion!" he said. "You have tried my patience to the utmost limit, till I have come to the pitch when I will stand no more trifling. Do you understand? To-night I am your master. To-night—for the last time—I ask you, will you marry me? Think well before you decide! To-morrow—possibly—you may be not only willing, but anxious, but"—he shrugged his shoulders again—"I may have other plans by that time."

"Ah!" she said, and put a hand to her head.

The floor had begun to sway under her feet. His face, with its cruel, set smile, had receded into distance. She was cold from head to foot with an icy coldness, and she thought her heart had ceased to beat. She felt herself totter.

And then there came the grasp of his hand, holding her back as it seemed on the very edge of the abyss. And instinctively she clung to the support he offered, with gasping, incoherent entreaty.

"Oh, hold me up! Save me! Don't let me fall!"

"Sit down!" he said. "Here is a chair! Now drink! It's all right. You'll be better in a minute."

She felt the rim of a glass against her chattering teeth, and she drank with her head against his arm.

The wine was like fire in her veins; the awful numbness passed.

"Better?" said Rotherby. "Come, this is rather a terrible fuss to make, isn't it? Drink a little more!"

She drank again, and then, as he released her, bent forward over the table, hiding her face. A great shiver went through her and passed. She sat bowed and silent.

After a few seconds he spoke again, his tone quite friendly, but with that hint of mastery which made her realize how completely she was at his mercy.

"Sit up and have some supper! You will feel much better for it. Afterwards we will sit by the fire and talk."

She raised herself slowly, propping her chin on her hands. She spoke haltingly, with difficulty, almost as if it were in a foreign language.

"If I give my promise—to—to—to—marry—you, will you—let me—go?"

"To-night?" he said.

"Yes, to-night." She did not look at him; she was staring before her at a picture on the opposite wall—a picture of heather-clad moors and running streams—but with eyes that saw not.

THERE was a brief pause, then very suddenly the man behind her moved. He bent and took her head between his hands, compelling her to face him.

"Why should I do that?" he said.

She met his look, though an irrepressible shudder went through her at his touch. "Because," she said, in the same slow, uncertain way, "you are a man—and I—am a woman. I am at your mercy—now, but I shall not always be. If you want to—to—hold me by any means—except force—then—you will be merciful. No! Listen! I am at your mercy. I know it. I own it. But—you are not all beast. If you will let me go, I will promise to marry you—as soon as you wish. If you will not let me go, you will have your way to-night. But after to-night—after to-night——"

"Well?" he said, awed in spite of himself by her voice, her words, her look, yet half-mocking still. "After to-night?"

"After to-night," she said, and drew herself from his hold, facing him with a gesture of freedom that was even regal, "you will never see me again, because I swear to you—before God—that I shall be dead."

He blenched a little, but in a moment recovered himself. "Pshaw! Words are easy—especially with women. That threat doesn't move me."

"No." She got up from her chair with a

strange calmness. "It may not—yet. But it will—it will. If you were all beast, you might not care. But you are a man at heart, and so you will never forget it. And you will care—terribly—afterwards."

She turned from him with the words, walked to the settee before the stove, and sat down, holding her hands to the warmth, ignoring his presence utterly.

He did not follow her. There was that about her that made it impossible just then. He had not thought that she had the strength so to dominate the situation. It had been completely in his own hands, but somehow it had passed out of his control. Wherefore? The sight of her weakness had made the conquest seem so easy that he had almost despised her for it. And now?

He turned sullenly from her, took up a glass, and drank.

After many seconds he spoke. "The last time I saw you, you gave me to understand that it was only your pride that kept you from marrying me. That is not the reason you want to back out now."

"I gave you my reason then," she made answer, without turning. "I did not love you."

"You loved me once," he rejoined, "before you threw me over."

She uttered a short, hard sigh. "I hadn't even begun to know the meaning of the word."

"You loved me once," he repeated, doggedly. "What did I ever do to forfeit your love?"

She turned suddenly as she sat, and faced him, pale, with burning eyes of accusation.

"I will tell you what you did. You desecrated my love. You killed it at birth. You treated me then—as you are treating me now—dishonourably. You gave me stones for bread, and you are doing it still. I think you are incapable of anything else. Love—real love—is out of your reach!"

The fire of her words scorched him; he drew back. "Gad!" he said. "If you'd lived in the old days, you'd have been burnt as a witch."

"There are worse fates than that," she answered, very bitterly.

"There are!" he returned with a flash of anger. "And hotter hells! Well, you've made your conditions. I accept them. You are free to go."

He flung the words with a force and suddenness that struck her like a blow. She sat for a few moments, staring at him. Then, with an effort, she rose.

"Do you mean that?"

He came close to her. His face was drawn. Somehow she felt as though she were looking at an animal through the iron bars of a cage.

He spoke between his teeth. "Yes, I mean it. I will let you go—just to show you that—as you kindly remarked just now—I am not—all—beast. But—I hold you to your promise. Is that understood? You will marry me."

She lifted her head with a certain pride. "I have said it," she said, and turned from him.

He thrust out a hand and grasped her shoulder. "You will say it again!" he said.

She stopped. That grip of his sent panic to her heart, but she stilled it with a desperate sense of expediency. Yet, for the moment she could not speak, so terrible was the strain, and in that moment, as she stood summoning her strength, there came the sound of an electric bell cleaving the dreadful silence so suddenly that she cried out and almost fell.

"Damnation!" Rotherby said. "See here! I shall have to go to the door. You don't want to be seen here. You'd better go into the other room."

He indicated a door at the farther end of the one in which they stood, and she turned towards it instinctively.

He went with her and opened it, switching on a light. She glanced within, and drew back.

"Go in!" he urged. "I can't help it. It's only for a few seconds. I won't let anyone in. Quick! It's the only way."

She turned to him like a hunted creature, wildly beseeching quarter. "You will let me go afterwards? You promise it? You swear it?"

"Of course I will let you go," he said. "There goes that damn' bell again. You'll be all right here, and I won't keep you long."

He almost pushed her into the room, and shut the door upon her. The bell was pealing imperatively. She sank into a chair at the foot of the bed, and wondered if this nightmare would ever pass.

CHAPTER III.

THE AWAKENING.

THE door was shut, but there came to Frances the sound of voices in the distance, and she listened intently, holding her breath. At any moment Rotherby might return, at any moment the dread struggle might be resumed. He had given her his word, but she did not trust him. She never had trusted him; and the memory of his grip upon her shoulder gave her small cause for confidence now. She glanced around her for a possible means of escape, but the only other door in the room led into the little hall in which

"After to-night," she said, "you will never see me again, because I swear to you —before God—that I shall be dead."

even now Rotherby was parleying with his unwelcome visitor. The impulse came to her to brave all risk of observation and walk straight out while he was thus occupied, but a more wary instinct bade her pause. So, with stretched nerves, prepared for immediate flight, she waited.

The opportunity came even sooner than she expected. Very suddenly she heard the tramp of feet in the room she had just quitted, and in a second she was on her feet.

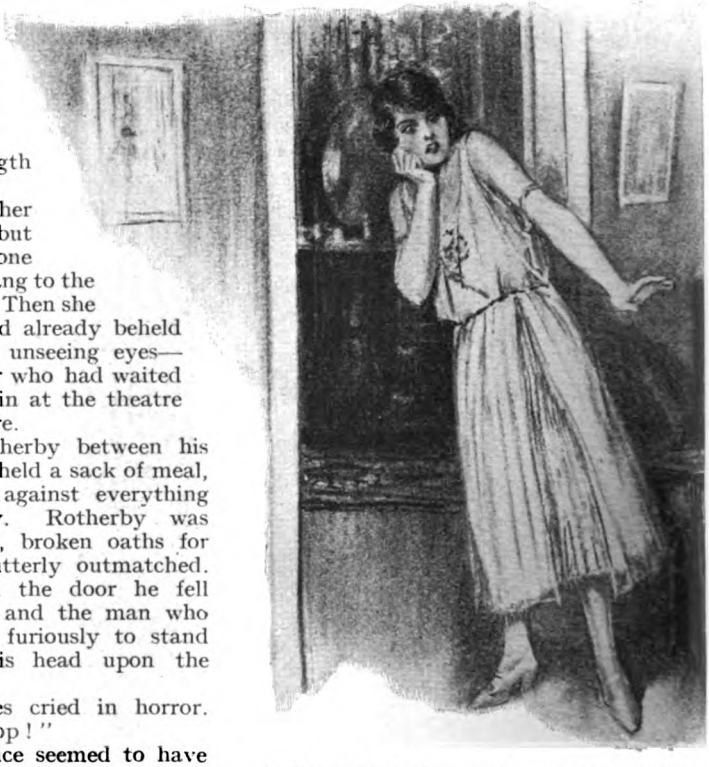
But in that second she heard a voice raised abruptly like the blare of an angry bull, and she stood rooted to the spot, listening, listening, listening, with her hands clasped tight upon her heart.

Words reached her through the tumult of sound, words and the sounds of a fierce struggle.

"Damn you, I'll have an answer! I'll kill you if you don't speak. What? You infernal skunk, do you think I'd stick at

killing you? There's nothing I'd enjoy more."

There followed a dreadful series of sounds as of something being banged against the wall by which she stood, and then suddenly there came a terrific blow against the door itself. A cry followed the blow—a gurgling, terrible cry, and it did for Frances what nothing else could have done; it gave her strength to act.



She could have made her escape in that moment, but the bare thought was gone from her mind. She sprang to the door and threw it open. Then she saw that which she had already beheld that evening, but with unseeing eyes—the big man in the ulster who had waited just below her in the rain at the theatre steps half an hour before.

He was holding Rotherby between his hands as he might have held a sack of meal, and banging his head against everything hard in the vicinity. Rotherby was struggling with gasping, broken oaths for freedom, but he was utterly outmatched. As Frances flung open the door he fell backwards at her feet, and the man who gripped him proceeded furiously to stand over him and bang his head upon the floor.

"Oh, stop!" Frances cried in horror. "Oh, for God's sake, stop!"

He stopped. Her voice seemed to have an almost miraculous effect upon him. He stopped. But he knelt upon Rotherby, holding him down, and his face, suffused with passion, was to her the most appalling sight she had ever beheld.

There followed an awful silence, during which he remained quite motionless, bent over his enemy. Rotherby was bleeding profusely at the nose, but he was half-stunned and seemed unaware of it. His arms were flung wide, and his hands opened and shut convulsively, in a manner that made the onlooker shudder.

At last, when she could endure no longer, huskily, with tremendous effort, she spoke. "Do you want—to kill him?"

He raised his head slowly and looked at her, and she felt a quick, piercing pain at her heart that made her catch her breath.

"I have wanted to kill him for years," he said. "Do you value his life? If not——"

And even as he spoke she saw his right hand move towards the throat of the prostrate man.

She cried out wildly at the sight, in an anguish of horror. "Arthur, no—no—no! That's murder! Arthur, stop!"

"He is worse than a murderer," Arthur said in the same fatalistic tone.

"Ah, no!" she made gasping answer. "And you! And you!"

"And—you!" he said, with terrible emphasis.

She broke in upon him desperately, for the need was great. "He has done me no harm. Let him go! You must—you must let him go!"

"Why?" he said.

"Because I ask you—I beg you—because—because——" She halted, frantically searching for adequate words. "Oh, wait!" she besought him. "Wait!"

His eyes regarded her immovably. "For your sake?" he said at last.

She wrung her hands together. "Yes—yes!"

He got slowly to his feet. "For your sake, then," he said. "Now tell me—what are you doing here? And why did you cry out just now when I rang the bell?"

His manner was absolutely quiet, but there was that in his look that warned her that the danger was not past. She did not dare to tell him the truth.

"I cried out," she said, "because—I was

startled. I hid in this room for the same reason."

"And—you came here—for what?" he said.

She glanced away to the spread table, for she could not meet his eyes. "We had been to the theatre. I came in—for supper."

"And he has behaved towards you absolutely as a gentleman should?" he questioned, in the same level voice that made her think of a weapon poised for striking.

"Yes—oh, yes!" she answered.

He was silent for a moment or two, and she knew that his look searched her unsparingly. Then: "I don't believe you are telling me the truth," he said. "But I shall soon know."

He turned abruptly to the man on the floor. "Get up!" he said.

Rotherby had drawn his hands over his face. He rolled on to his side as the curt command reached him, and in a few seconds, grabbing at a chair, he dragged himself to his feet. But his face was ashen and he could not stand. He dropped into the chair with a groan.

Frances went to the washing-stand, squeezed out a sponge in cold water, and brought it to him. He took it in a dazed fashion and mopped the blood from his nose and mouth.

Arthur stood by, massive and motionless, his face set in iron lines. He was like an executioner, grim as doom, waiting for his victim. He made no comment when Frances brought towel and basin to Rotherby's side and helped him.

But at length, as Rotherby began to show signs of recovery, he waved her to one side. "Now, you! Let's have your version! What are you and Miss Thorold doing here?"

As Frances flung open the door he fell backwards at her feet, and the man who gripped him proceeded furiously to stand over him and bang his head upon the floor.

Rotherby looked at him through narrowed lids. His face was very evil as he made reply: "I chance to live here."

"I know that. And you'll die here without any chance about it if you don't choose to give me a straight answer to my questions. What did you bring her here for?"

"What the devil is that to you?" said Rotherby sullenly. "You go to hell!"

Though he was beaten so that he could hardly lift his head, he showed no fear, and

for that Frances, who knew something of the temperament of the man who had beaten him, accorded him a certain admiration. To be punished as he had been punished, and yet to refuse submission, proved a strength with which she had hardly credited him.

At Arthur's swift gesture of exasperation she moved forward, intervening. "Let me speak!" she said. "I will answer your questions."

She stood between the two men, and again, vesting her with a majesty which was not normally hers, there came to her aid the consciousness of standing for the right. Whatever the outcome, she recognized that the protection of Rotherby must somehow be accomplished. To save the one man from death and the other from committing murder, she braced herself for the greatest battle of her life.

Arthur's look came back to her. He regarded her sombrely, as though he recognized in her a factor that must be dealt with.

"You say he brought you here for supper," he said. "Did he give you no reason for believing that he meant to keep you here all night?"

She faced him steadfastly. The man's life hung in the balance. It rested with her—it rested with her.

"I was on the point of leaving when you arrived," she said.

"Is that the truth?" he said.

"It is the truth," she answered, quietly.

"You honestly believe he meant to let you go?"

"Yes." Her eyes looked straight into his with the words. She realized that the tension was slackening, but she dared not relax her own vigilance. The danger was not yet past. Not yet had she accomplished her end.

"He has never given you any cause to distrust him?" Arthur said.

She hesitated momentarily. "I am trusting him now," she said, finally.

"Why?" He flung the word with a touch of fierceness. "You are saying this to bluff me. It is not true."

"It is true," she said resolutely, paused a second, then very firmly made her position secure. "I am trusting him because—because I have promised to be his wife."

The declaration fell between them like a bombshell. She did not know how she uttered it, and, having done so, there came a mist before her eyes which seemed to fog all her senses, making it impossible for her to gauge the result—to realize in any sense the devastation she had wrought.

Arthur's voice came to her at last, low, hoarse with restraint. "So that is why you came to town!"

She could not answer him. There was no reproach in his tone, but the pain of it was more agonizing to her than any suffering of her own.

He spoke again at length, and in his voice was a subtle difference that told her the end was within sight—the battle almost won.

"I am beginning to understand," he said. "I thought—somehow I thought—I had misjudged you—that night at Tetherstones—you remember? Well, I know better now. I shall never make that mistake again. If he marries you, no doubt you will consider yourself lucky. But—just in case you don't know—I had better warn you that he doesn't stick at letting a woman down if it suits his purpose."

His voice grew harder, colder; it had a steely edge. "You may have heard of a sister of mine who died some years ago—Nan? He ruined her deliberately, intentionally. He never meant to make good. She was young. She didn't know the world as you know it. She—actually loved him. And she paid the penalty. We all paid to a certain extent. That is why"—his tone suddenly deepened—"I have sworn to kill him if he ever comes my way again—as I would kill a poisonous reptile. Perhaps it seems unreasonable to you. Your ideas are different. But—the fact remains."

Again there fell a silence, and she counted the seconds, asking herself how long—how long? Somewhere within her she seemed to hear the echo of the words that he had spoken on that terrible night at Tetherstones. "I loved you—I—loved you!" And now as then she felt that the fires of hell were very near. But she would not faint this time. O God, she must not faint!

He spoke again—for the last time—and there was a sound of dreadful laughter in his voice.

"It seems I have come on a fool's errand," he said. "I can only apologize for my intrusion, and withdraw. No doubt you know best how to play your own game. I only regret that I did not realize sooner what it was."

And with that he turned and went. But as she stood numbly listening to the heavy tread of his feet as he went away, she knew no sense of conquest or even of relief. The battle was over, but she herself was wounded past all hope. And she thought her heart must die within her, so bitter was the pain.

CHAPTER IV.

THE VICTORY.

HE was gone. The clang of the outer door spoke to his departure.

She came to herself like a dazed mariner flung ashore by the breakers, hardly

believing that the peril was over. A great weakness was upon her, and she knew that she could not stand against it. Of Rotherby's very existence at the moment she was unaware. Mechanically, gropingly, she made her way to the settee before the stove and sank down upon it. She was shivering violently.

"It is dead—it is dead!" she kept saying to herself over and over. "It is quite—quite dead!"

But for a long time she could not bring herself to realize why she said it, or what it was that was dead.

At last by slow and painful degrees it came to her in all its immensity, crushing her down. She had slain his love. She had killed her own romance. From that night onwards he would never think of her again save with reviling and bitterness of soul.

She sat there with her hands outstretched, but hot tears were rolling down her face, unheeded, unchecked, the tears of a great despair.

There came a voice behind her—Rotherby's voice, and she started slightly, remembering him. It was curious how little he counted now.

"Frances," he said, and with her outer consciousness she noticed an odd embarrassment in his tone and faintly wondered, "I've made a pretty poor show of this. Don't cry! You're perfectly safe."

"Am I crying?" she said, and put a hand to her face.

He came and sat beside her. "Listen!" he said. "I've been a damned cad. And you're a topper. I never knew you had it in you—or any woman had, for the matter of that. There's nothing I won't do for you after this. Understand?"

Something in his tone reached her. She turned slowly and looked at him. His face was very pale, and his eyes looked drawn and strained; but except for this she saw no traces about him of the recent struggle. He met her gaze with a faint smile.

"I've had all the nonsense knocked out of me for to-night," he said. "But I suppose I'm lucky to be here at all. That fellow has the strength of an ox. The back of my head is like a jelly."

"I thought he meant to kill you," she said dully.

"He did," said Rotherby. "You saved my life."

"Did I?" Her look fell away from him. "It wasn't for your sake," she said, after a moment. "It was for his."

"I gathered that," said Rotherby. "That's what makes you so wonderful."

"I don't feel wonderful," she said.

He leaned towards her. "Don't cry!" he said again. "You are wonderful. And you've made me feel a cur of the very first magnitude. Have some food, and I'll take you back! You're going to trust me, aren't you? I swear I won't let you down after this. You're not afraid of me?"

"Oh, no, I am not afraid of you," she said.

SHE was in a vague fashion grateful for his kindness, and when he brought her food she forced herself to eat lest he should think her unappreciative. It revived her also, lifting the awful weight of inertia from her senses, so that after a while she was capable of coherent thought again.

"That's better," Rotherby said presently. "Look here! You won't believe me, but I'm most damnably sorry for all this."

"I do believe you," she said, with a wan smile.

"Oh, I don't mean the hammering," he said. "I'm actually thinking of you for a change. I've been a rotter all my life, and I don't count. But you—you're straight. I always knew you were. And I've found out something more about you to-night. I've found out why you turned me down."

He got up abruptly, and began to walk about the room.

"I half guessed it long ago. I know it now. You love this hairy-heeled chap who nearly killed me to-night. You needn't bother to deny it. You love him and he loves you. And yet—and yet—you let him believe—that of you! Good God! There isn't another woman on earth would have done it."

"I had to do it," Frances said with simplicity. "He would have killed you."

"Yes, he would have killed me—and swung for it. You didn't want him to swing. Listen!" He came suddenly to her and knelt by her side. "You told me a little while ago that I was not all beast, that I was a man at heart. And you're right. I am—I am. Frances, I swear to you—I'll never let you down after this."

He gripped her hand fast. "You don't know what a brute I am," he said. "I'm going to tell you. That fellow—Arthur Dermot as he styles himself—is my cousin. His father is Dr. Rotherby's brother. We were friends once, he and I—sort of brothers, you understand. He had a sister—a lot of sisters—one in particular—a lovely girl—Nan." He paused. "Somehow you have always reminded me of Nan, so dainty, so queenly in your ways, so quick of sympathy—so full of charm. Well, I loved her—she loved me. It was a midsummer madness—one of those exquisite dreams that one revels in like a draught of wine, and then forgets."

"That isn't love," said Frances.

He lifted his shoulders. "Isn't it? Well, perhaps you are right. I never wholly forgot. But we were young. She was only twenty. No one suspected us of falling in love until the thing was done. Then there was an outcry—first cousins—no marriage. We hadn't even begun to think of marriage, but I swear—I swear—I never meant to let her down. But she—she was like a flame, and in the end—well, you know what happened in the end. We came to our senses very early one summer morning. She was scared, and when I tried to calm her she flew into a passion. I got angry too. We quarrelled and separated. That very day the old Bishop, my trustee he was then, sent for me and told me he had a mission for me to execute in Australia. It was a trumped-up job. I knew it at the time. But I was hot-headed, and there had been talk of foreign travel before. I took it for granted that our dream had come to an end. I accepted and went."

"How could you?" Frances said.

He raised his shoulders again. "I told you I was a brute. But at the time it seemed the only thing to do. The dream was over. One doesn't sit over the cards in broad daylight."

The cynicism habitual to him sounded in the last words. She shrank a little and withdrew her hand.

"How wicked!" she said. "How contemptible!"

A curious shiver went through the man. He got up to cover it, and resumed his pacing of the room.

"I was away for over two years," he went on, speaking as one impelled. "I never heard from her during that time. I almost forgot her. Then I came home. I found they had left Oxford. Did I tell you old Dermot Rotherby had held a professorship there, and Arthur was reading for the Bar? No one seemed to know where they were. Old Theodore, the Bishop, had been appointed to Burminster. I went to him, asked him for news. He said Dermot's health had broken down, and they had taken a farm in the country. They had never been much to one another. He spoke very vaguely of them. It was Aunt Dorothea who let it out. She told me Nan had died mysteriously—that there had been a child—that they had changed their name in consequence. So I decided to let sleeping dogs lie, and cleared out of the country again. Then at last I got tired of wandering and came home. I went to Burminster, and met—you. You caught me then. You've held me ever since. And I could have won you—I could have won you——" He stopped abruptly. "What's the good of talking? I've lost you now, haven't I? You'll never look at me again."

"Never," Frances said.

He glanced at her once or twice as he walked, and finally came and stood before her.

"I haven't told you quite everything even now," he said. "There's one thing I'm almost afraid to tell you. Shall I go on—or shall I hold my peace?"

"I think I have got to know," she said, "whatever it is."

"All right," he said recklessly. "You shall know. After some damnable fate had taken you to Tetherstones, after they had tried to murder me and failed, after that night at Fordestown when you refused to come with me, the devil entered into me, and I made up my mind I'd get you—at any cost. And so I played you a trick. Do you understand? I tricked you—to get you up here."

She did not flinch or give any sign of feeling. "Do you mean about my sketches?" she said.

"Yes. That's just what I do mean. I have got them all here. No one has seen them but myself."

A faint frown drew her forehead. "But you paid for them," she said.

"I know. That was part of my damned scheme to get you into my power. You were always so independent. I thought when once you realized that you had been living on my money, it would break your spirit."

"How—odd!" she said.

And that was all. No word of reproach or condemnation; yet the man winced as if he had been struck in the face.

"My God!" he said. "If you would only curse me! Any other woman would."

"But why?" she said. "The fault was mine. I always knew—in my heart—that you were—that sort of man."

He struck his fist into his hand. "Frances, I swear to you—I swear to you—— No, what's the good of swearing? I'll show you. Look here! We won't talk any more to-night. We're both dead beat. I'll take you back to your hotel. And in a day or two—if you will trust me—I'll show you that I am not—that sort of man. Will you trust me, Frances? Give me this one chance of making good? I'm a blackguard, I own it; but I can play the game if I try. Will you trust me?"

She held out her hand to him mutely, and as he took it she rose to her feet, looking him straight in the eyes. But she did not utter one word. She had spoken her condemnation and there was nothing left to say.

Not by strength and not by strategy, but by purity of heart, she had conquered the devil in his soul.

(To be concluded.)

HE STORY
F MY LIFE BY A. CONAN DOYL

OCT 8 1923

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

e by FRY
GRAVE
CHOCOLATE
page 6.

PERIODICAL
GENERAL LI
UNIV. OF M

P. G. WODEHOUSE
E. P. OPPENHEIM · W. B. MAXWELL
STACY AUMONIER · PERCEVAL GIBBON
ETHEL M. DELL · F. BRITTEN AUST

From the Parents' point of view

—Every reason for satisfaction is found in Calvert's Carbolic Tooth Powder. The pleasant flavour of this famous dentifrice makes it easy to get children to begin taking proper care of their teeth.

—And as they get older they, like others, will appreciate the full value of that thorough antiseptic cleansing which it provides.

Calvert's

CARBOLIC

Tooth Powder

Your chemist sells it. **6d.**, **1/-** *and* **1/6** *tins.*
Made by F. C. Calvert & Co., Manchester.

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
October, 1923.

As ship's surgeon.

A West African adventure.

Waiting for patients.

As a lecturer.

A. CONAN DOYLE.

In Egypt.

As Parliamentary candidate.

In the cricket-field.

A friendly bout.

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER 1.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

I WAS born on May 22nd, 1859, at Picardy Place, Edinburgh, so named because in old days a colony of French Huguenots had settled there. At the time of their coming it was a village outside the city walls, but now it is at the end of George Street, abutting upon Leith Walk. When last I visited it, it seemed to have degenerated, but at that time the flats were of good repute.

A silhouette by E. O. Hoppé.

My father was the youngest son of John Doyle, who, under the *nom de crayon* of "H. B.," made a great reputation in London from about 1825 to 1850. He came from Dublin about the year 1815, and may be said to be the father of polite caricature, for in the old days satire took the brutal shape of making the object grotesque in features and figure. Gilray and Rowlandson had no other idea. My grandfather was a gentleman, drawing gentlemen for gentlemen, and the satire lay in the wit of the picture and not in the misdrawing of faces. This was a new idea, but it has been followed by most caricaturists since, and so has become familiar. There were no comic papers in those days, and the weekly cartoon of "H. B." was lithographed and distributed. He exerted, I am told, quite an influence upon politics, and was on terms of intimacy with many of the leading men of the day. I can remember him in his old age, a very handsome and dignified man, with features of the strong Anglo-Irish, Duke of Wellington stamp. He died in 1868.

FOUR REMARKABLE BROTHERS.

My grandfather was a widower with a numerous family, of which four boys and one girl survived. Each of the boys made a name for himself, for all inherited the artistic powers of their father. The elder, James Doyle, wrote "The Chronicles of England," illustrated with coloured pictures by himself—examples of colour-printing which beat any subsequent work that I have ever seen. He also spent thirteen years in doing "The Official Baronage of England," a wonderful monument of industry and learning. Another brother was Henry Doyle, a great judge of old paintings, and in later years the manager of the National Gallery in Dublin, where he earned his C.B. The third son was Richard Doyle, whose whimsical humour made him famous in *Punch*, and whose cover with its dancing elves is still so familiar an object. Finally came Charles Doyle, my father.

The Doyle family seem to have been fairly well-to-do, thanks to my grandfather's talents. They lived in London in Cambridge Terrace. A sketch of their family life is given in "Dicky Doyle's Diary." They lived up to their income, however, and it

Copyright, 1923, by A. Conan Doyle.

became necessary to find places for the boys. When my father was only nineteen a seat was offered him in the Government Office of Works in Edinburgh, whither he went. There he spent his working life, and thus it came about that I, an Irishman by extraction, was born in the Scottish capital.

The Doyles, Anglo-Norman in origin, were strong Roman Catholics. The original Irish Doyle was a cadet-branch of the Worcestershire Doyles, which has produced Sir Francis Hastings Doyle and many other distinguished men. This cadet shared in the invasion of Ireland and was granted estates in County Wexford, where a great clan rose of dependents, illegitimate children and others, all taking the feudal lord's name, just as the de Burghs founded the clan of Burke. We can only claim to be the main stem by virtue of community of character and appearance with the English Doyles and the unbroken use of the same crest and coat-of-arms.

My forbears, like most old Irish families in the south, kept to the old faith at the Reformation and fell victims to the penal laws in consequence. These became so crushing upon landed gentry that my great-grandfather was driven from his estate and became a silk-mercer in Dublin, where "H. B." was born. This family record was curiously confirmed by Monsignor Barry Doyle, destined, I think, for the highest honours of the Roman Church, who traces back to the younger brother of my great-grandfather.

MY MOTHER'S FAMILY TREE.

I trust the reader will indulge me in my excursion into these family matters, which are of vital interest to the family, but must be tedious to the outsider. As I am on the subject, I wish to say a word upon my mother's family, the more so as she was great on archæology, and had, with the help of Sir Arthur Vicars, Ulster King of Arms, and himself a relative, worked out her descent for more than five hundred years, and so composed a family tree which lies before me as I write, and on which many of the great ones of the earth have roosted.

Her father was a young doctor of Trinity College, William Foley, who died young and left his family in comparative poverty. He had married one Katherine Pack, whose death-bed—or rather the white waxen thing which lay upon that bed—is the very earliest recollection of my life. Her near relative—uncle, I think—was Sir Denis Pack, who led the Scottish brigade at Waterloo. The Packs were a fighting family, as was but right since they were descended in straight line from a major in Cromwell's army who settled in Ireland. One of them, Anthony Pack, had part of his head carried off at the same battle, so I fear it is part of our family tradition that we lose our heads in action. His brain was covered over by a silver plate and he lived for many years, subject only to very bad fits of temper, which some of us have had with less excuse.

But the real romance of the family lies in the fact that about the middle of the seventeenth century the Reverend Richard Pack, who was head of Kilkenny College, married Mary Percy, who was heir to the Irish branch of the Percys of Northumberland. By this alliance we all connect up (and I have every generation by name, as marked out by my dear mother) with that illustrious line up to three separate marriages with the Plantagenets. One has, therefore, some strange strains in one's blood which are noble in origin and, one can but hope, are noble in tendency.

Conan Doyle when four years old.

But all this romance of ancestry did not interfere with the fact that when Katherine Pack, the Irish gentlewoman, came in her widowhood to Edinburgh she was very poor. I have never been clear why it was Edinburgh for which she made. Just at this time, 1850 or thereabouts, Charles Doyle was sent from London with a recommendation to the priests that they should guard his young morals and budding faith. How could they do this better than by finding him quarters with a well-born and orthodox widow? Thus it came about that two separate lines of

Irish wanderers came together under one roof.

I have a little bundle of my father's letters written in those days, full of appreciation of the kindness which he met with, and full also of interesting observations on that Scottish society, rough, hard-drinking, and kindly, into which he had been precipitated at a dangerously early age, especially for one with his artistic temperament. He had some fine religious instincts, but his environment was a difficult one. In the household was a bright-eyed, very intelligent younger daughter, Mary, who presently went off to France and returned as a very cultivated young woman. The romance is easily understood, and so Charles Doyle in the year 1855 married Mary Foley, my mother, the young couple still residing with my grandmother.

Conan Doyle's mother at the age of 30.

AN UNRECOGNIZED GENIUS.

Their means were limited, for his salary as a Civil Servant was not more than about two hundred and forty pounds. This he supplemented by his drawings. Thus matters remained for practically all his life, for he was quite unambitious and no great promotion ever came his way. His painting was done spasmodically and the family did not always reap the benefit, for Edinburgh is full of water-colours which he had given away. It is one of my unfulfilled schemes to collect as many as possible and to have a Charles Doyle exhibition in London, for the critics would be surprised to find what a great and original artist he was—far the greatest, in my opinion, of the family. His brush was concerned not only with fairies and delicate themes of the kind, but with wild and fearsome subjects, so that his work had a very peculiar style of its own, mitigated by great natural humour. He was more terrible than Blake and less morbid than Wiertz. His originality is best shown by the fact that one hardly knows with whom to compare him. In prosaic Scotland, however, he excited wonder rather than admiration, and he was only known in the larger world of London by pen-and-ink book illustrations, which were not his best mode of expression. The prosaic outcome was that, including all his earnings, my mother could never have averaged more than three hundred pounds a year on which to educate a large family.

We lived in the hardy and bracing atmosphere of poverty, and we each in turn did our best to help those who were younger than ourselves. My noble sister Annette, who died just as the sunshine of better days came into our lives, went out at a very early age as a governess to Portugal, and sent all her salary home. My younger sisters, Lottie and Connie, both did the same thing; and I helped as I could. But it was still my dear mother who bore the long, sordid strain. Often I said to her, "When you are old, Mammie, you shall have a velvet dress and gold glasses, and sit in comfort by the fire." Thank God, it so came to pass. My father, I fear, was of little help to her, for his thoughts were always in the clouds and he had no appreciа-

tion of the realities of life. The world, not the family, gets the fruits of genius.

SCHOOLDAYS.

Of my boyhood I need say little, save that it was Spartan at home and more Spartan at the Edinburgh school, where a tawse-brandishing schoolmaster of the old type made our young lives miserable. From the ages of seven to nine I suffered under this pock-marked, one-eyed rascal, who might have stepped from the pages of Dickens. The evening, home, and books were my sole consolation, save for week-end holidays. They were rough boys, and I became a rough boy, too. If there is any truth in the idea of reincarnation—a point on which my mind is still open—I think some earlier experience of mine must have been as a stark fighter, for it came out strongly in youth, when I rejoiced in battle. We lived for some time in a *cul-de-sac* street with a very vivid life of its own, and a fierce feud between the small boys who dwelt on either side of it. Finally it was fought out between two champions, I representing the poorer boys who lived in flats and my opponent the richer boys who lived in the opposite villas. We fought in the garden of one of the said villas and had an excellent contest of many rounds, not being strong enough to weaken each other. When I got home after the battle my mother cried, "Oh, Arthur, what a dreadful eye you have got!" To which I replied, "You just go across and look at Eddie Tulloch's eye!"

Conan Doyle and his father, Charles Doyle.

I met a well-deserved set-back on one occasion when I stood forward to fight a bootmaker's boy, who had come into our preserve upon an errand. He had a green baize bag in his hand which contained a heavy boot, and this he swung against my skull with a force which knocked me pretty well senseless. It was a useful lesson. I will say for myself, however, that though I was pugnacious I was never so to those weaker than myself, and that some of my escapades were in the defence of such.

A REMINISCENCE OF THACKERAY

One or two little pictures stand out which may be worth recording. When my grandfather's grand London friends passed through Edinburgh they used, to our occasional embarrassment, to call at the little flat "to see how Charles is getting on." In my earliest childhood such a one came, tall, white-haired, and affable. I was so young that it seems like a faint dream, and yet it pleases me to think that I have sat on Thackeray's knee. He greatly admired my dear little mother with her grey Irish eyes and her vivacious Celtic ways—indeed, no one met her without being captivated by her.

Once, too, I got a glimpse of history. It

was in 1866, if my dates are right, that some well-to-do Irish relatives asked us over for a few weeks, and we passed that time in a great house in King's County. I spent much of it with the horses and dogs, and became friendly with the young groom. The stables opened out on to a country road by an arched gate with a loft over it. One morning, being in the yard, I saw the young groom rush in with every sign of fear and hastily shut and bar the doors. He then climbed into the loft, beckoning to me to come with him. From the loft window we saw a gang of rough men, twenty or so, slouching along down the road. When they came opposite to the gate they stopped, and, looking up, they shook their fists and cursed at us. The groom answered back most volubly. Afterwards I understood that these men were a party of Fenians, and that I had had a glimpse of one of the periodical troubles which poor old Ireland has endured. Perhaps now, at last, they may be drawing to an end.

MY FIRST STORY.

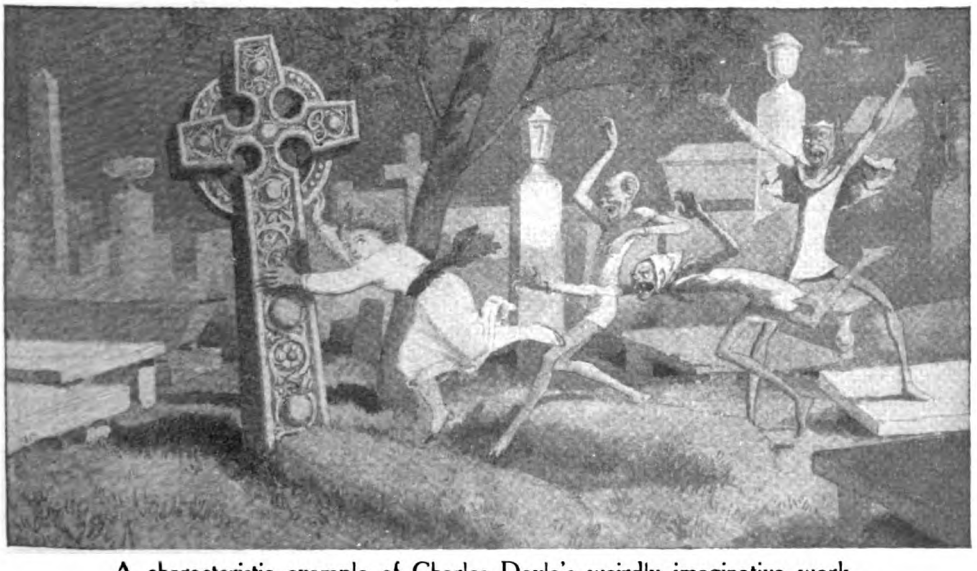
During these first ten years I was a rapid reader, so rapid that some small library with which we dealt gave my mother notice that books would not be changed more than twice a day. My tastes were boylike enough, for Mayne Reid was my favourite author, and his "Scalp Hunters" my favourite book. I wrote a little book and illustrated it myself in early days. There was a man in it, and there was a tiger who amalgamated shortly after they met. I remarked to my mother with precocious wisdom that it was easy to get people into scrapes, but not so easy to get them out again, which is surely the experience of every writer of adventures.

CHAPTER II.

UNDER THE JESUITS.

I WAS in my tenth year when I was sent to Hodder, which is the preparatory school for Stonyhurst, the big Roman Catholic public school in Lancashire. It was a long journey for a little boy who had never been away from home before, and I felt very lonesome and wept bitterly upon the way, but in due time I arrived safely at Preston, which was then the nearest station, and with many other small boys and our black-robed Jesuit guardians we drove some twelve miles to the school. Hodder is about a mile from Stonyhurst, and as all the boys there are youngsters under twelve, it forms a very useful institution, breaking a lad into school ways before he mixes with the big fellows.

I had two years at Hodder. The year was not broken up by the frequent holidays which illuminate the present educational period. Save for six weeks each summer, one never left the school. On the whole, those first two years were happy years. I could hold my own both in brain and in strength with my comrades. I was fortunate enough to get under the care of a kindly principal, one Father Cassidy, who was more human than Jesuits usually are. I have always kept a warm remembrance of this man and of his gentle ways to the little boys—young



A characteristic example of Charles Doyle's weirdly imaginative work.

rascals many of us—who were committed to his care. I remember the Franco-German War breaking out at this period, and how it made a ripple even in our secluded backwater.

THE MISTAKES OF EDUCATION.

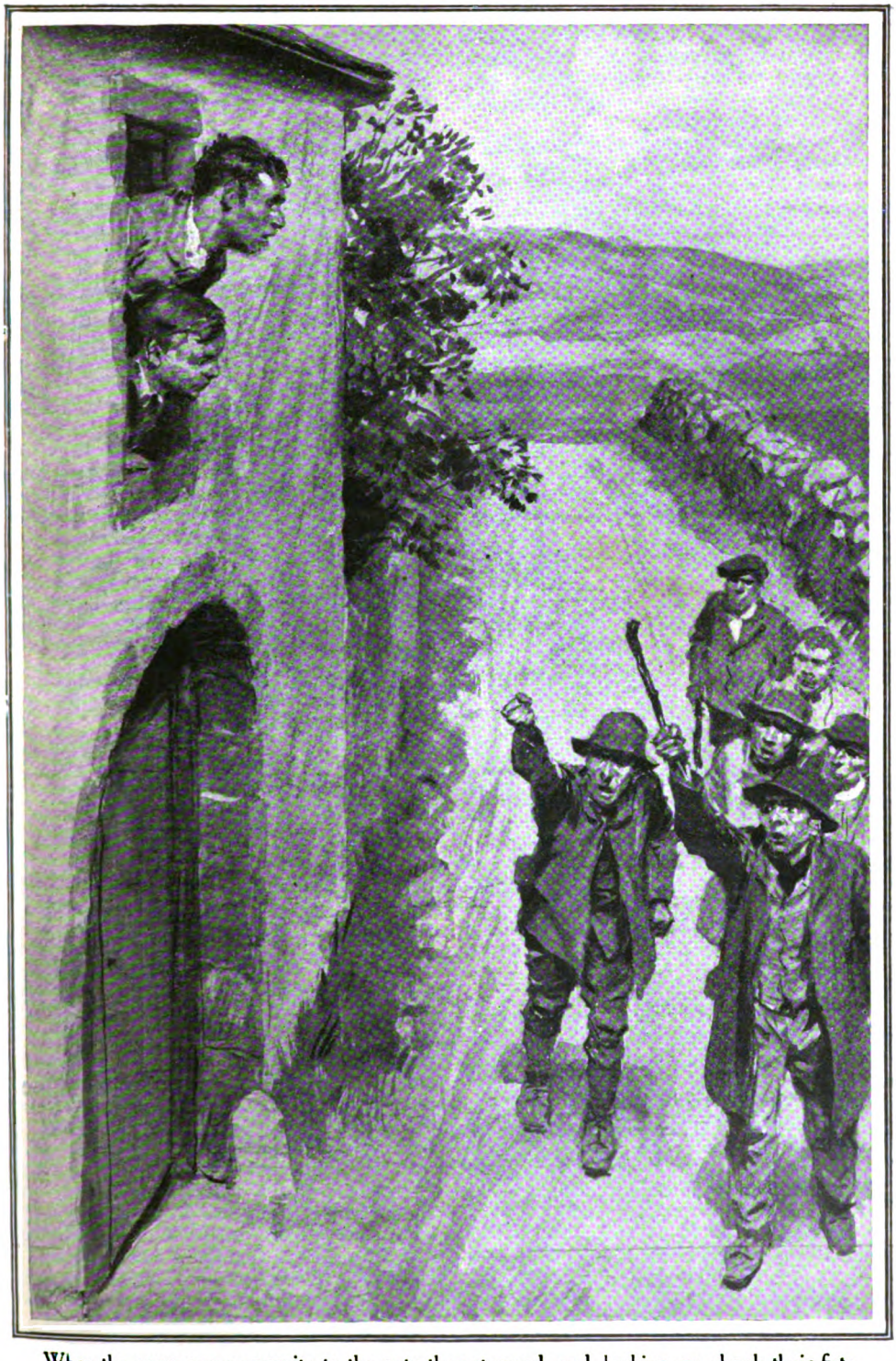
From Hodder I passed on to Stonyhurst, that grand mediæval dwelling-house which was left some hundred and fifty years ago to the Jesuits, who brought over their whole teaching staff from some college in Holland in order to carry it on as a public school. The general curriculum, like the building, was mediæval but sound. I understand it has been modernized since. There were seven classes—elements, figures, rudiments, grammar, syntax, poetry, and rhetoric—and you were allotted a year for each, or seven in all—a course with which I faithfully complied. It was the usual public school routine of euclid, algebra, and the classics, taught in the usual way, which is calculated to leave a lasting abhorrence of these subjects. To give boys a little slab of Virgil or Homer with no general idea as to what it is all about or what the classical age was like is surely an absurd way of treating the subject. I am sure that an intelligent boy could learn more by reading a good translation of Homer for a week than by a year's study of the original as it is usually carried out. It was no worse at Stonyhurst than at any other school, and it can only be excused on the plea that any exercise, however stupid in itself, forms a sort of mental dumbbell by which one can improve one's mind. It is, I think, a thoroughly false theory. I can say with truth that my Latin and Greek, which cost me so many weary hours, have been little use to me in life, and that my mathematics have been no use at all. On the other hand, some things which I picked up almost by accident—the art of reading aloud, learned when my mother was knitting, or the reading of French books, learned by spelling out the captions of the Jules Verne illustrations—have been of the greatest possible service. My classical education left me with a horror of the classics, and I was astonished to find how fascinating they were when I read them in a reasonable manner in later years.

Conan Doyle at the age of 14.

Year by year, then, I see myself climbing those seven weary steps and passing through as many stages of my boyhood. I do not know if the Jesuit system of education is good or not; I would need to have tried another system as well before I could answer that. On the whole it was justified by results, for I think it turned out as decent a set of young fellows as any other school would do. In spite of a large infusion of foreigners and some disaffected Irish, we were a patriotic crowd, and our little pulse beat time with the heart of the nation. I am told that the average of V.C.'s and D.S.O.'s now held by old Stonyhurst boys is very high as compared with others. The Jesuit teachers have no trust in human nature, and perhaps they are justified. We were never allowed for an instant to be alone with each other, and I think that the immorality which is rife in public schools was at a minimum in consequence. In our games and our walks the priests always took part, and a master perambulated the dormitories at night. Such a system may weaken self-respect and self-help, but it at least minimizes temptation and scandal.

SPARTAN SCHOOLING.

The life was Spartan, and yet we had all that was needed. Dry bread and hot, well-watered milk was our frugal breakfast. There was a joint and twice a week a pudding for dinner. Then there was an odd snack called "bread and beer" in the afternoon, a bit of dry bread and the most extraordinary drink, which was brown but had no other characteristic of beer. Finally, there was hot milk again, bread, butter, and often potatoes for supper. We were all very healthy upon this *régime*, with fish, of course (salt fish), on Fridays. Everything in every way was plain to the verge of



When the gang came opposite to the gate they stopped, and, looking up, shook their fists and cursed at us. Afterwards I understood that these men were a party of Fenians.

austerity, save that we dwelt in a beautiful building, dined in a marble-floored hall with minstrels' gallery, prayed in a lovely church, and generally lived in very choice surroundings so far as vision and not comfort was concerned.

Corporal punishment was severe, and I can speak with feeling, as I think few, if any, boys of my time endured more of it. It was of a peculiar nature, imported also, I fancy, from Holland. The instrument was a piece of india-rubber of the size and shape of a thick boot sole. This was called a "tolley"—why, no one has explained, unless it is a Latin pun on what we had to bear. One blow of this instrument, delivered with intent, would cause the palm of the hand to swell up and change colour. When I say that the usual punishment of the larger boys was nine on each hand, and that nine on one hand was the absolute minimum, it will be understood that it was a severe ordeal, and that the sufferer could not, as a rule, turn the handle of the door to get out of the room in which he had suffered. To take twice nine upon a cold day was about the extremity of human endurance. I think, however, that it was good for us in the end, for it was a point of honour with many of us not to show that we were hurt, and that is one of the best trainings for a hard life.

If I was more beaten than others, it was not that I was in any way vicious, but it was that I had a nature which responded eagerly to affectionate kindness (which I never received), but which rebelled against threats and took a perverted pride in showing that it could not be cowed by violence. I went out of my way to do really mischievous and outrageous things simply to show that my spirit was unbroken. An appeal to my better nature and not to my fears would have found an answer at once. I deserved all I got for what I did, but I did it because I was mishandled.

I do not remember anyone who attained particular distinction among my schoolfellows, save Bernard Partridge, of *Punch*, whom I recollect as a very quiet, gentle boy. Father Thurston, who was destined to be one of my opponents in psychic matters so many years later, was in the class above me. There was a young novice, too, with whom I hardly came in contact, but whose handsome and spiritual appearance I well remember. He was Bernard Vaughan, afterwards the famous preacher. Save for one schoolfellow, James Ryan—a remarkable boy who grew into a remarkable man—I carried away no lasting friendship from Stonyhurst.

It was only in the latest stage of my Stonyhurst development that I realized that I had some literary streak in me which was not common to all. It came to me as quite a surprise, and even more perhaps to my masters, who had taken a rather hopeless view of my future prospects. One master, when I told him that I thought of being a civil engineer, remarked, "Well, Doyle, you may be an engineer, but I don't think you will ever be a civil one." Another assured me that I would never do any good in the world, and perhaps, from his point of view, his prophecy has been justified.

EARLY EFFORTS AT VERSE.

The particular incident, however, which brought my latent powers to the surface depended upon the fact that in the second highest class, which I reached in 1874, it was incumbent to write poetry (so called) on any theme given. This was done as a dreary, unnatural task by most boys. Very comical their wooings of the muses used to be. For one saturated as I really was with affection for verse, it was a labour of love, and I produced verses which were poor enough in themselves but seemed miracles to those who had no urge in that direction. The particular theme was the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, and my effort, from—

> "*Like pallid daisies in a grassy wood,*
> *So round the sward the tents of Israel stood*";

through—

> "*There was no time for thought and none for fear,*
> *For Egypt's horse already pressed their rear*";

down to the climax—

> "*One horrid cry! The tragedy was o'er,*
> *And Pharaoh with his army seen no more,*"

was workmanlike though wooden and conventional. Anyhow, it marked what Mr. Stead used to call a sign-post, and I realized myself a little. In the last year I edited the college magazine and wrote a good deal of indifferent verse. I also went up for the Matriculation examination of London University, a good, all-round test which winds up the Stonyhurst curriculum, and I surprised everyone by taking honours, so, after all, I emerged from Stonyhurst at the age of sixteen with more credit than seemed probable from my rather questionable record.

Early in my career there an offer had been made to my mother that my school fees would be remitted if I were dedicated to the Church. She refused this, so both the Church and I had an escape. When I think, however, of her small income and great

struggle to keep up appearances and make both ends meet, it was a fine example of her independence of character, for it meant paying out some fifty pounds a year which might have been avoided by a word of assent.

AT SCHOOL IN GERMANY.

I had yet another year with the Jesuits, for it was determined that I was still too young to begin any professional studies, and that I should go to Germany and learn German. I was dispatched, therefore, to Feldkirch, which is a Jesuit school in the Vorarlberg province of Austria, to which many better-class German boys are sent. Here the conditions were much more humane, and I met with far more human kindness than at Stonyhurst, with the immediate result that I ceased to be a resentful young rebel and became a pillar of law and order.

Conan Doyle's three sisters in their governess days.

I began badly, however, for on the first night of my arrival I was kept awake by a boy snoring loudly in the dormitory. I stood it as long as I could, but at last I was driven to action. Curious wooden compasses called "*bettschere*," or "bed-scissors," were stuck into each side of the narrow beds. One of these I plucked out, walked down the dormitory, and, having spotted the offender, proceeded to poke him with my stick. He woke up, and was considerably amazed to see in the dim light a large youth whom he had never seen before—I arrived after hours—assaulting him with a club. I was still engaged in stirring him up when I felt a touch on my shoulder, and was confronted by the master, who ordered me back to bed. Next morning I got a lecture on free-and-easy English ways and taking the law into my own hands. But this start was really my worst lapse, and I did well in the future.

A HAPPY YEAR.

It was a happy year on the whole. I made less progress with German than I should, for there were about twenty English and Irish boys, who naturally balked the wishes of their parents by herding together. There was no cricket, but there were tobogganing and fair football, and a weird game—football on stilts. Then there were the lovely mountains round us, with an occasional walk among them. The food was better than at Stonyhurst, and we had the pleasant German light beer instead of the horrible swipes of Stonyhurst. One unlooked-for accomplishment I acquired, for the boy who played the big brass bass instrument in the fine school band had not returned, and, as a well-grown lad was needed, I was at once enlisted in the service. I played in public—good music, too, "Lohengrin" and "Tannhäuser"—within a week or two of my first lesson, but they pressed me on for the occasion, and the bombardon, as it was called, only comes in on a measured rhythm with an occasional run, which sounds like a hippopotamus doing a step-dance. So big was the instrument that I remember the other bandsmen putting all my sheets and blankets inside it, and my surprise when I could not get out a note. It was in the summer of 1876 that I left Feldkirch, and I have always had a pleasant memory of the Austrian Jesuits and of the old school.

MY STRANGE ARRIVAL IN PARIS.

On my way back to England I stopped at Paris. Through all my life up to this

point there had been an unseen grand-uncle, named Michael Conan, to whom I must now devote a paragraph. He came into the family from the fact that my father's father ("H. B.") had married a Miss Conan. Michael Conan, her brother, had been editor of the *Art Journal* and was a man of distinction, an intellectual Irishman of the type which originally founded the Sinn Fein movement. He was as keen on heraldry and genealogy as my mother, and he traced his descent in some circuitous way from the Dukes of Brittany, who were all Conans; indeed, Arthur Conan was the ill-fated young Duke whose eyes were put out, according to Shakespeare, by King John. This uncle was my godfather, and hence my name, Arthur Conan.

He lived in Paris and had expressed a wish that his grand-nephew and godson, with whom he had corresponded, should call *en passant*. I ran my money affairs so closely, after a rather lively supper at Strasburg, that when I reached Paris I had just twopence in my pocket. As I could not well drive up and ask my uncle to pay the cab I left my trunk at the station and set forth on foot. I reached the river, walked along it, came to the foot of the Champs Elysées, saw the Arc de Triomphe in the distance, and then, knowing that the Avenue Wagram, where my uncle lived, was near there, I tramped it on a hot August day and finally found him. I remember that I was exhausted with the heat and the walking, and that when at the last gasp I saw a man buy a drink of what seemed to be porter by handing a penny to a man who had a long tin on his back. I therefore halted the man and spent one of my pennies on a duplicate drink. It proved to be liquorice and water, but it revived me when I badly needed it, and it could not be said that I arrived penniless at my uncle's, for I actually had a penny.

So, for some penurious weeks, I was in Paris with this dear old volcanic Irishman, who spent his day in his shirt-sleeves, with a little dicky-bird of a wife waiting upon him. I am built rather on his lines of body and mind than on any of the Doyles. He had been, as I mentioned, editor of the *Art Journal*, and I still have a letter written to him by Tom Moore in that capacity, a curious link with the past.

CHAPTER III.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A STUDENT.

WHEN I returned to Edinburgh, with little to show either mental or spiritual for my pleasant school year in Germany, I found that the family affairs were still as straitened as ever. No promotion had come to my father, and two younger children, Innes, my only brother, and Ida, had arrived to add to the calls upon my mother. Another sister, Julia, followed shortly afterwards. But Annette, the elder sister, had already gone out to Portugal as governess to earn and send home a fair salary, while Lottie and Connie were about to do the same. My mother had adopted the device of sharing a large house, which may have eased her in some ways, but was disastrous in others.

Perhaps it was good for me that the times were hard, for I was wild, full-blooded, and a trifle reckless, but the situation called for energy and application, so that one was bound to try to meet it. My mother had been so splendid that we could not fail her. It had been determined that I should be a doctor, chiefly, I think, because Edinburgh was so famous a centre for medical learning. It meant another long effort for my mother, but she was very brave and ambitious where her children were concerned, and I was not only to have a medical education, but to take the University degree, which was a larger matter than a mere licence to practise.

A SAD DISAPPOINTMENT.

When I returned from Germany I found that there was a long list of bursaries and scholarships open for competition. I had a month in which to brush up my classics, and then I went in for these, and was informed a week later that I had won the Grierson bursary of forty pounds for two years. Great were the rejoicings and all shadows seemed to be lifting. But on calling to get the money I was informed that there had been a clerical error, and that this particular bursary was only open to arts students. As there was a long list of prizes I naturally supposed that I would get the next highest, which was available for medicals. The official pulled a long face and said: "Unfortunately, the candidate to whom it was allotted has already drawn the money." It was manifest robbery, and yet I, who had won the prize and needed it so badly, never received it, and was eventually put off with a solatium of seven pounds, which had accumulated from some fund. It was a bitter disappointment, and, of course, I had a legal case, but what can a penniless student do, and what sort of college career would he have if he began it by suing his University for money? I was advised to accept the situation, and there seemed no prospect of accepting anything else.

STUDENT DAYS IN EDINBURGH.

So now behold me, a tall, strongly-framed, but half-formed young man, fairly

I remember that I was exhausted with the heat and the walking, and that when at the last gasp I spent one of my last two pennies on a drink

entered upon my five years' course of medical study. I entered as a student in October, 1876, and I passed my final examination with fair but not notable distinction at the end of the winter session of 1881. I was now a bachelor of medicine and a master of surgery, fairly launched upon my professional career. Between these two points lies one long, weary grind at botany, chemistry, anatomy, physiology, and a whole list of compulsory subjects, many of which have a very indirect bearing upon the art of curing. The whole system of teaching, as I look back upon it, seems far too oblique and not nearly practical enough for the purpose in view. And yet Edinburgh is, I believe, more practical than most other colleges. It is practical, too, in its preparation for life, since there is none of the atmosphere of an enlarged public school, as is the case in English Universities, but the student lives a free man in his own rooms, with no restrictions of any sort. It ruins some and makes strong men of many. In my own case, of course, this did not apply, since my family lived in the town, and I worked from my own home.

There was no attempt at friendship, or even of acquaintance, between professors and students at Edinburgh. It was a strictly business arrangement by which you paid, for example, four guineas for anatomy lectures and received the winter course in exchange, never seeing your professor save behind his desk and never in any circumstances exchanging a word with him.

They were remarkable men, however, some of these professors, and we managed to know them pretty well without any personal acquaintance. There was kindly Crum Brown, the chemist, who sheltered himself carefully before exploding some mixture which usually failed to ignite, so that the loud "Boom!" uttered by the class was the only resulting sound. Brown would emerge from his retreat with a "Really, gentlemen!" of remonstrance, and go on without allusion to the abortive

experiment. There was Melville Thomson, the zoologist, fresh from his *Challenger* expedition, and Balfour, with the face and manner of John Knox, a hard, rugged old man, who harried the students in their exams. and was in consequence harried by them for the rest of the year. There was Turner, a fine anatomist, but a self-educated man, as was betrayed when he used to "take and put this structure on the handle of this scalpel." The most human trait that I can recall of Turner was that upon one occasion the sacred quadrangle was invaded by snowballing roughs. His class, of whom I was one, heard the sounds of battle and fidgeted in their seats, on which the professor said: "I think, gentlemen, your presence may be more useful outside than here," on which we flocked out with a whoop, and soon had the quadrangle clear.

A rough sketch of himself made by Conan Doyle in 1881, on learning that he had obtained his diploma as a Bachelor of Medicine.

THE ORIGINAL OF PROFESSOR CHALLENGER.

Most vividly of all, however, there stands out in my memory the squat figure of Professor Rutherford with his Assyrian beard, his prodigious voice, his enormous chest, and his singular manner. He fascinated and awed us. I have endeavoured to reproduce some of his peculiarities in the fictitious character of Professor Challenger. He would sometimes start his lecture before he reached the classroom, so that we would hear a booming voice saying: "There are valves in the veins," or some other information, when the desk was still empty. He was, I fear, a rather ruthless vivisector, and though I have always recognized that a minimum of painless vivisection is necessary, I am glad that the law was made more stringent so as to restrain such men as he. "Ach, these Jarman frags!" he would exclaim in his curious accent, as he tore some poor amphibian to pieces.

I wrote a students' song which is still sung, I understand, in which a curious article is picked up on the Portobello beach and each professor in turn claims it for his department. Rutherford's verse ran:—

Said Rutherford with a smile,
"It's a mass of solid bile,
And I myself obtained it, what is more,
By a stringent cholagogue
From a vivisected dog,
And I lost it on the Portobello shore."

If the song is indeed still sung it may be of interest to the present generation to know that I was the author.

SHERLOCK HOLMES IN REAL LIFE.

But the most notable of the characters whom I met was one Joseph Bell, surgeon at the Edinburgh Infirmary. Bell was a very remarkable man in body and mind. He was thin, wiry, dark, with a high-nosed, acute face, penetrating grey eyes, angular shoulders, and a jerky way of walking. His voice was high and discordant. He was a very skilful surgeon, but his strong point was diagnosis, not only of disease, but of occupation and character. For some reason which I have never understood, he singled me out from the drove of students who frequented his wards and made me his out-patient clerk, which meant that I had to array his out-patients, make simple notes of their cases, and then show them in, one by one, to the large room in which Bell sat in state surrounded by his dressers and students. Then I had ample chance of studying his methods and in noticing that he often learned more of the patient by a few quick glances than I had done by my questions. Occasionally the results were very dramatic, though there were times when he blundered. In one of his best cases he said to a civilian patient: "Well, my man, you've served in the army?"

"Aye, sir."

"Not long discharged?"

"No, sir."

"A Highland regiment?"

"Aye, sir."

"A non-com. officer?"

"Aye, sir."

"Stationed at Barbados?"

"Aye, sir."

" You see, gentlemen," he would explain, " the man was a respectful man, but did not remove his hat. They do not in the army, but he would have learned civilian ways had he been long discharged. He has an air of authority and he is obviously Scottish. As to Barbados, his complaint is elephantiasis, which is West Indian and not British."

To his audience of Watsons it all seemed very miraculous until it was explained, and then it became simple enough. It is no wonder that after the study of such a character I used and amplified his methods when in later life I tried to build up a scientific detective who solved cases on his own merits and not through the folly of the criminal. Bell took a keen interest in these detective tales, and even made suggestions which were not, I am bound to say, very practical. I kept in touch with him for many years, and he used to come upon my platform to support me when I contested Edinburgh in 1901.

When I took over his out-patient work he warned me that a knowledge of Scottish idioms was necessary, and I, with the confidence of youth, declared that I had got it. The sequel was amusing. On one of the first days an old man came who, in response to my question, declared that he had a " bealin' in his huckster." This fairly beat me, much to Bell's amusement. It seems that the words really mean an abscess in the armpit.

Speaking generally of my University career I may say that though I took my fences in my stride and balked at none of them, still I won no distinction in the race. I was always one of the ruck, neither lingering nor gaining—a sixty per cent. man at examinations. There were, however, some reasons for this which I will now state.

Sherlock Holmes in real life—
Dr. Joseph Bell, the Edinburgh surgeon.

EARLY MEDICAL EXPERIENCES.

It was clearly very needful that I should help financially as quickly as possible, even if my help only took the humble form of providing for my own keep. Therefore I endeavoured almost from the first to compress the classes for a year into half a year, and so to have some months in which to earn a little money as a medical assistant, who would dispense and do odd jobs for a doctor. When I first set forth to do this my services were so obviously worth nothing that I had to put that valuation upon them. Even then it might have been a hard bargain for the doctor, for I might have proved like the youth in " Pickwick " who had a rooted idea that oxalic acid was Epsom salts. However, I had horse sense enough to save myself and my employer from any absolute catastrophe.

My first venture, in the early summer of '78, was with a Dr. Richardson, running a low-class practice in the poorer quarters of Sheffield. I did my best, and I dare say he was patient, but at the end of three weeks we parted by mutual consent. I went on to London, where I renewed my advertisements in the medical papers, and found a refuge for some weeks with my Doyle relatives, then living at Clifton Gardens, Maida Vale. I fear that I was too Bohemian for them and they too conventional for me. However, they were kind to me, and I roamed about London for some time with pockets so empty that there was little chance of idleness breeding its usual mischief. I remember that there were signs of trouble in the East, and that the recruiting sergeants, who were very busy in Trafalgar Square, took my measure in a moment and were very insistent that I should take the shilling. There was a time when I was quite disposed to do so, but my mother's plans held me back. I may say that late in the same year I did volunteer as a dresser for the English ambulances sent to Turkey for the Russian War, and was on the Red Cross list, but the collapse of the Turks prevented my going out.

A TEST OF NERVE.

Soon, however, there came an answer to my advertisement: "Third year's student, desiring experience rather than remuneration, offers his services," etc., etc. It was from a Dr. Elliott, living in a townlet in Shropshire which rejoiced in the extraordinary name of "Ruyton-of-the-eleven-towns." It was not big enough to make one town, far less eleven. There for four months I helped in a country practice. It was a very quiet existence and I had much time to myself, so that I really trace some little mental progress to that period, for I read and I thought without interruption. My medical duties were of a routine nature save on a few occasions. One of them still stands out in my memory, for it was the first time in my life that I ever had to test my own nerve in a great sudden emergency. The doctor was out when there came a half-crazed messenger to say that in some rejoicings at a neighbouring great house they had exploded an old cannon, which had promptly burst and grievously injured one of the bystanders. No doctor was available, so I was the last resource. On arriving there I found a man in bed with a lump of iron sticking out of the side of his head. I tried not to show the alarm which I felt, and I did the obvious thing by pulling out the iron. I could see the clean white bone, so I could assure them that the brain had not been injured. I then pulled the gash together, stanched the bleeding, and finally bound it up, so that when the doctor did at last arrive he had little to add. This incident gave me confidence and, what is more important still, gave others confidence.

After a winter's work at the University, my next assistantship was a real money-making proposition to the extent of some two pounds a month. This was with Dr. Hoare, a well-known Birmingham doctor, who had a five-horse city practice, and every working doctor would, before the days of motors, realize that this meant going from morning to night. He earned some three thousand a year, which takes some doing when it is collected from three-and-sixpenny visits and one-and-sixpenny bottles of medicine, among the very poorest classes of Aston. Hoare was a fine fellow, stout, square, red-faced, bushy-whiskered, and dark-eyed. His wife was also a very kindly and gifted woman, and my position in the house was soon rather that of a son than of an assistant. The work, however, was hard and incessant, and the pay very small. I had long lists of prescriptions to make up every day, for we dispensed our own medicine, and one hundred bottles of an evening were not unknown. On the whole I made few mistakes, though I have been known to send out ointment and pill-boxes with elaborate directions on the lid and nothing inside. I had my own visiting list also, the poorest or the most convalescent, and I saw a great deal, for better or worse, of very low life. Twice I returned to this Birmingham practice, and always my relations with the family became closer. At my second visit my knowledge had greatly extended and I did midwifery cases and the more severe cases in general practice, as well as all the dispensing. I had no time to spend any money, and it was as well, for every shilling was needed at home.

MY FIRST ACCEPTED STORY.

It was in this year that I first learned that shillings might be earned in other ways than by filling phials. Some friend remarked to me that my letters were very vivid, and surely I could write some things to sell I may say that the general aspiration towards literature was tremendously strong upon me, and that my mind was reaching out in what seemed an aimless way in all sorts of directions. In Edinburgh I used to be allowed twopence for my lunch, that being the price of a mutton pie, but near the pie-shop was a second-hand bookshop with a barrel full of old books and the legend "Your choice for 2d." stuck above it. Often the price of my luncheon used to be spent on some sample out of this barrel, and I have within reach of my arm as I write these lines copies of Gordon's "Tacitus," Temple's works, Pope's "Homer," Addison's *Spectator*, and Swift's works which all came out of the two-penny box. Anyone observing my actions and tastes would have said that so strong a spring would certainly overflow; but for my own part I never dreamed I could myself produce decent prose, and the remark of my friend, who was by no means given to flattery, took me greatly by surprise. I sat down, however, and wrote a little adventure story, which I called "The Mystery of the Sassassa Valley." To my great joy and surprise it was accepted by *Chambers's Journal*, and I received three guineas. It mattered not that other attempts failed. I had done it once and I cheered myself by the thought that I could do it again. It was years before I touched *Chambers's* again, but in 1879 I had a story, "The American's Tale," in *London Society*, for which also I got a small cheque. But the idea of real success was still far from my mind.

(Next month Sir A. Conan Doyle will describe his Voyage to West Africa as Ship's Surgeon, and his First Experiences in Practice on his Return to England.)

UKRIDGE SEES HER THROUGH

by

P.G.WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

THE girl from the typewriting and stenographic bureau had a quiet but speaking eye. At first it had registered nothing but enthusiasm and the desire to please. But now, rising from that formidable notebook, it met mine with a look of exasperated bewilderment. There was an expression of strained sweetness on her face, as of a good woman unjustly put upon. I could read what was in her mind as clearly as if she had been impolite enough to shout it. She thought me a fool. And as this made the thing unanimous, for I had been feeling exactly the same myself for the last quarter of an hour, I decided that the painful exhibition must now terminate.

It was Ukridge who had let me in for the thing. He had fired my imagination with tales of authors who were able to turn out five thousand words a day by dictating their stuff to a stenographer instead of writing it; and though I felt at the time that he was merely trying to drum up trade for the typewriting bureau in which his young friend Dora Mason was now a partner, the lure of the idea had gripped me. Like all writers, I had a sturdy distaste for solid work, and this seemed to offer a pleasant way out, turning literary composition into a jolly *tête-à-tête* chat. It was only when those gleaming eyes looked eagerly into mine and that twitching pencil poised itself to record the lightest of my golden thoughts that I discovered what I was up against. For fifteen minutes I had been experiencing all the complex emotions of a nervous man who, suddenly called upon to make a public speech, realizes too late that his brain has been withdrawn and replaced by a cheap cauliflower substitute: and I was through.

"I'm sorry," I said, "but I'm afraid it's not much use going on. I don't seem able to manage it."

Now that I had come frankly out into the open and admitted my idiocy, the girl's expression softened. She closed her notebook forgivingly.

"Lots of people can't," she said. "It's just a knack."

"Everything seems to go out of my head."

"I've often thought it must be very difficult to dictate."

Two minds with but a single thought, in fact. Her sweet reasonableness, combined with the relief that the thing was over, induced in me a desire to babble. One has the same feeling when the dentist lets one out of his chair.

"You're from the Norfolk Street Agency, aren't you?" I said. A silly question, seeing that I had expressly rung them up on the telephone and asked them to send somebody round; but I was still feeling the effects of the ether.

"Yes."

"That's in Norfolk Street, isn't it? I mean," I went on hurriedly, "I wonder if you know a Miss Mason there? Miss Dora Mason."

She seemed surprised.

"My name is Dora Mason," she said.

I was surprised, too. I had not supposed that partners in typewriting businesses stooped to going out on these errands. And

Copyright, 1923, by P. G. Wodehouse.

I was conscious of a return of my former embarrassment, feeling—quite unreasonably, for I had only seen her once in my life, and then from a distance—that I ought to have remembered her.

"We were short-handed at the office," she explained, "so I came along. But how do you know my name?"

"I am a great friend of Ukridge's."

"Why, of course! I was wondering why your name was so familiar. I've heard him talk so much about you."

And after that we really did settle down to the cosy *tête-à-tête* of which I had had visions. She was a nice girl, the only noticeable flaw in her character being an absurd respect for Ukridge's intelligence and abilities. I, who had known that foe of the human race from boyhood up and was still writhing beneath the memory of the night when he had sneaked my dress clothes, could have corrected her estimate of him, but it seemed unkind to shatter her girlish dreams.

"He was wonderful about this typewriting business," she said. "It was such a splendid opportunity, and but for Mr. Ukridge I should have had to let it slip. You see, they were asking two hundred pounds for the partnership, and I only had a hundred. And Mr. Ukridge insisted on putting up the rest of the money. You see—I don't know if he told you—he insisted that he ought to do something because he says he lost me the position I had with his aunt. It wasn't his fault at all, really, but he kept saying that if I hadn't gone to that dance with him I shouldn't have got back late and been dismissed. So——"

She was a rapid talker, and it was only now that I was able to comment on the amazing statement which she had made in the opening portion of her speech. So stunning had been the effect of those few words on me that I had hardly heard her subsequent remarks.

"Did you say that Ukridge insisted on finding the rest?" I gasped.

"Yes. Wasn't it nice of him?"

"He gave you a hundred pounds? Ukridge!"

"Guaranteed it," said Miss Mason. "I arranged to pay a hundred pounds down and the rest in sixty days."

"But suppose the rest is not paid in sixty days?"

"Well, then I'm afraid I should lose my hundred. But it will be, of course. Mr. Ukridge told me to have no anxiety about that at all. Well, good-bye, Mr. Corcoran. I must be going now. I'm sorry we didn't get better results with the dictating. I should think it must be very difficult to do till you get used to it."

Her cheerful smile as she went out struck me as one of the most pathetic sights I had ever seen. Poor child, bustling off so brightly when her whole future rested on Ukridge's ability to raise a hundred pounds! I presumed that he was relying on one of those Utopian schemes of his which were to bring him in thousands—"at a conservative estimate, laddie!"—and not for the first time in a friendship of years the reflection came to me that Ukridge ought to be in some sort of a home. A capital fellow in many respects, but not a man lightly to be allowed at large.

I WAS pursuing this train of thought when the banging of the front door, followed by a pounding of footsteps on the stairs and a confused noise without, announced his arrival.

"I say, laddie," said Ukridge, entering the room, as was his habit, like a north-easterly gale, "was that Dora Mason I saw going down the street? It looked like her back. Has she been here?"

"Yes. I asked her agency to send someone to take dictation, and she came."

Ukridge reached out for the tobacco jar, filled his pipe, replenished his pouch, sank comfortably on to the sofa, adjusted the cushions, and bestowed an approving glance upon me.

"Corky, my boy," said Ukridge, "what I like about you and the reason why I always maintain that you will be a great man one of these days is that you have Vision. You have the big, broad, flexible outlook. You're not too proud to take advice. I say to you, 'Dictate your stuff, it'll pay you,' and, damme, you go straight off and do it. No arguing or shilly-shallying. You just go and do it. It's the spirit that wins to success. I like to see it. Dictating will add thousands a year to your income. I say it advisedly, laddie—thousands. And if you continue leading a steady and sober life and save your pennies, you'll be amazed at the way your capital will pile up. Money at five per cent. compound interest doubles itself every fourteen years. By the time you're forty——"

It seemed churlish to strike a jarring note after all these compliments, but it had to be done.

"Never mind about what's going to happen to me when I'm forty," I said. "What I want to know is what is all this I hear about you guaranteeing Miss Mason a hundred quid?"

"Ah, she told you? Yes," said Ukridge, airily, "I guaranteed it. Matter of conscience, old son. Man of honour, no alternative. You see, there's no getting away from it, it was my fault that she was sacked

"We were short-handed at the office," she explained, "so I came along."

by my aunt. Got to see her through, laddie, got to see her through."

I goggled at the man.

"Look here," I said, "let's get this thing straight. A couple of days ago you touched me for five shillings and said it would save your life."

"It did, old man, it did."

"And now you're talking of scattering hundred quids about the place as if you were Rothschild. Do you smoke it or inject it with a hypodermic needle?"

There was pain in Ukridge's eyes as he sat up and gazed at me through the smoke.

"I don't like this tone, laddie," he said, reproachfully. "Upon my Sam, it wounds me. It sounds as if you had lost faith in me, in my vision."

"Oh, I know you've got vision. And the big, broad, flexible outlook. Also snap, ginger, enterprise, and ears that stick out at right angles like the sails of a windmill. But that doesn't help me to understand where on earth you expect to get a hundred quid."

Ukridge smiled tolerantly.

"You don't suppose I would have guaranteed the money for poor little Dora unless I knew where to lay my hands on it, do you? If you ask me, Have I got the stuff at this precise moment? I candidly reply, No, I haven't. But it's fluttering on the horizon, laddie, fluttering on the horizon. I can hear the beating of its wings."

"Is Battling Billson going to fight someone and make your fortune again?"

Ukridge winced, and the look of pain flitted across his face once more.

"Don't mention that man's name to me, old horse," he begged. "Every time I think of him everything seems to go all black. No, the thing I have on hand now is a real, solid business proposition. Gilt-edged, you might call it. I ran into a bloke the other day whom I used to know out in Canada."

"I didn't know you had ever been in Canada," I interrupted.

"Of course I've been in Canada. Go over there and ask the first fellow you meet if I was ever in Canada. Canada! I should say I had been in Canada. Why, when I left Canada, I was seen off on the steamer by a couple of policemen. Well, I ran into this bloke in Piccadilly. He was wandering up and down and looking rather lost. Couldn't make out what the deuce he was doing over here, because, when I knew him, he hadn't a cent. Well, it seems that he got fed up with Canada and went over to America to try and make his fortune. And, by Jove,

he did, first crack out of the box. Bought a bit of land about the size of a pocket-handkerchief in Texas or Oklahoma or somewhere, and one morning, when he was hoeing the soil or planting turnips or something, out buzzed a whacking great oil-well. Apparently that sort of thing's happening every day out there. If I could get a bit of capital together, I'm dashed if I wouldn't go to Texas myself. Great open spaces where men are men, laddie—suit me down to the ground. Well, we got talking, and he said that he intended to settle in England. Came from London as a kid, but couldn't stick it at any price now because they had altered it so much. I told him the thing for him to do was to buy a house in the country with a decent bit of shooting, and he said, 'Well, how do you buy a house in the country with a decent bit of shooting?' and I said, 'Leave it entirely in my hands, old horse. I'll see you're treated right.' So he told me to go ahead, and I went to Farmingdons, the house-agent blokes in Cavendish Square. Had a chat with the manager. Very decent old bird with moth-eaten whiskers. I said I'd got a millionaire looking for a house in the country. 'Find him one, laddie,' I said, 'and we split the commish.' He said 'Right-o,' and any day now I expect to hear that he's dug up something suitable. Well, you can see for yourself what that's going to mean. These house-agent fellows take it as a personal affront if a client gets away from them with anything except a collar-stud and the clothes he stands up in, and I'm in halves. Reason it out, my boy, reason it out."

"You're sure this man really has money?"

"Crawling with it, laddie. Hasn't found out yet there's anything smaller than a five-pound note in circulation. He took me to lunch, and when he tipped the waiter the man burst into tears and kissed him on both cheeks."

I am bound to admit that I felt easier in my mind, for it really did seem as though the fortunes of Miss Mason rested on firm ground. I had never supposed that Ukridge could be associated with so sound a scheme, and I said so. In fact, I rather overdid my approval, for it encouraged him to borrow another five shillings; and before he left we were in treaty over a further deal which was to entail my advancing him half a sovereign in one solid payment. Business breeds business.

FOR the next ten days I saw nothing of Ukridge. As he was in the habit of making these periodical disappearances, I did not worry unduly as to the whereabouts of my wandering boy, but I was conscious from time to time of a mild wonder as to what had become of him. The mystery was solved one night when I was walking through Pall Mall on my way home after a late session with an actor acquaintance who was going into vaudeville, and to whom I hoped—mistakenly, as it turned out—to sell a one-act play.

I say night, but it was nearly two in the morning. The streets were black and deserted, silence was everywhere, and all London slept except Ukridge and a friend of his whom I came upon standing outside Hardy's fishing tackle shop. That is to say, Ukridge was standing outside the shop. His friend was sitting on the pavement with his back against a lamp-post.

As far as I could see in the uncertain light, he was a man of middle age, rugged of aspect and grizzled about the temples. I was able to inspect his temples because—doubtless from the best motives—he was wearing his hat on his left foot. He was correctly clad in dress clothes, but his appearance was a little marred by a splash of mud across his shirt-front and the fact that at some point earlier in the evening he had either thrown away or been deprived of his tie. He gazed fixedly at the hat with a poached-egg-like stare. He was the only man I had ever seen who was smoking two cigars at the same time.

Ukridge greeted me with the warmth of a beleaguered garrison welcoming the relieving army.

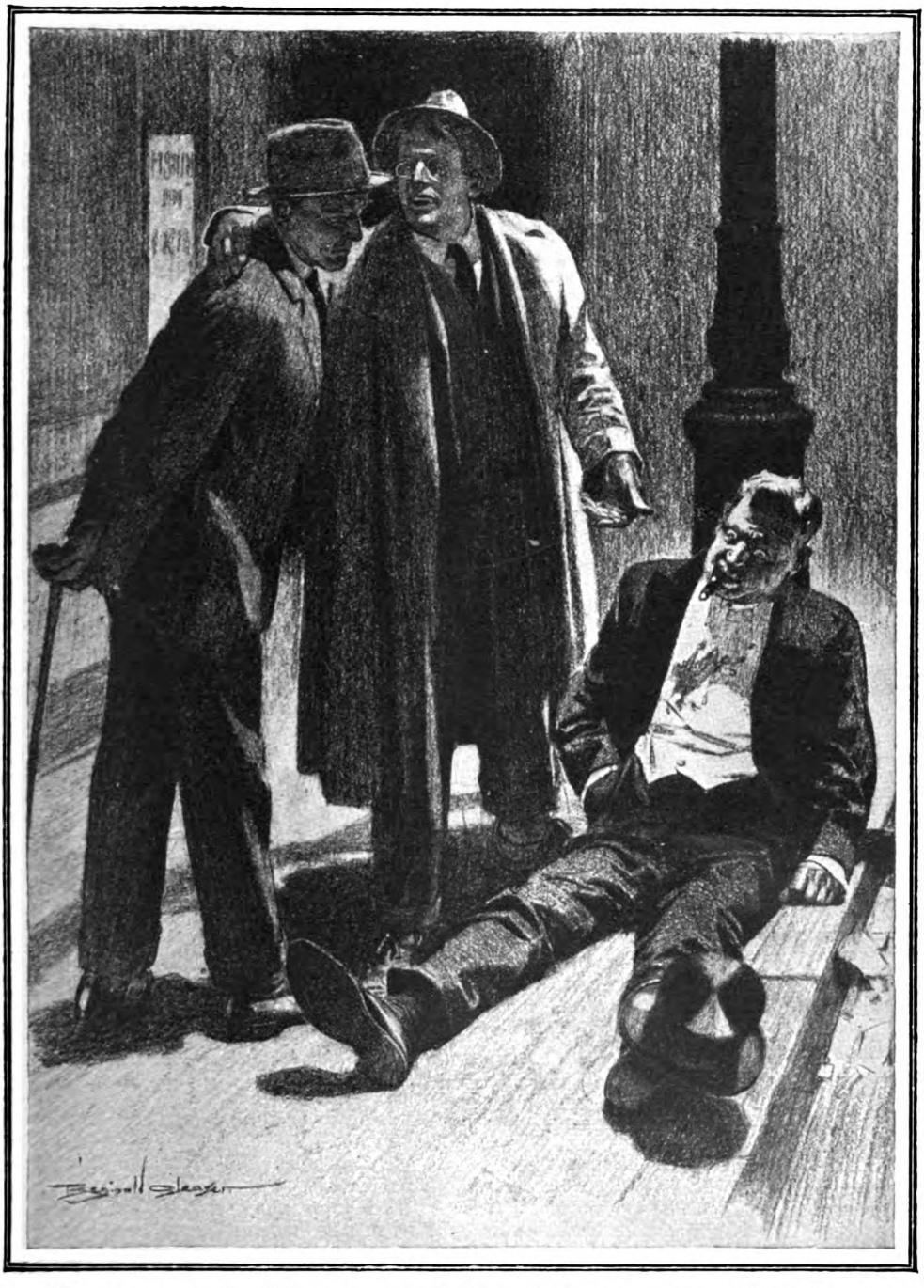
"My dear old horse! Just the man I wanted!" he cried, as if he had picked me out of a number of competing applicants. "You can give me a hand with Hank, laddie."

"Is this Hank?" I inquired, glancing at the recumbent sportsman, who had now closed his eyes as if the spectacle of the hat had begun to pall.

"Yes. Hank Philbrick. This is the bloke I was telling you about, the fellow who wants the house."

"He doesn't seem to want any house. He looks quite satisfied with the great open spaces."

"Poor old Hank's a bit under the weather," explained Ukridge, regarding his stricken friend with tolerant sympathy. "It takes him this way. The fact is, old man, it's a mistake for these blokes to come into money. They overdo things. The only thing Hank ever got to drink for the first fifty years of his life was water, with buttermilk as a treat on his birthday, and he's trying to make up for lost time. He's only just discovered that there are such things as liqueurs in the world, and he's making them rather a hobby. Says they're such a pretty colour. It wouldn't be so bad if he stuck to one at a time, but he likes



He was a man of middle age, grizzled about the temples. I was able to inspect his temples because—doubtless from the best motives—he was wearing his hat on his left foot.

making experiments. Mixes them, laddie. Orders the whole lot and blends them in a tankard. Well, I mean to say," said Ukridge reasonably, " you can't take more than five or six tankards of mixed benedictine, chartreuse, kummel, crème de menthe, and old brandy without feeling the strain a bit. Especially if you stoke up on champagne and burgundy."

A strong shudder ran through me at the thought. I gazed at the human cellar on the pavement with a feeling bordering on awe.

" Does he really ? "

" Every night for the last two weeks. I've been with him most of the time. I'm the only pal he's got in London, and he likes to have me round."

" What plans have you for his future ? His immediate future, I mean. Do we remove him somewhere or is he going to spend the night out here under the quiet stars ? "

" I thought, if you would lend a hand, old man, we could get him to the Carlton. He's staying there."

" He won't be long, if he comes in in this state."

" Bless you, my dear old man, they don't mind. He tipped the night-porter twenty quid yesterday and asked me if I thought it was enough. Lend a hand, laddie. Let's go."

I lent a hand, and we went.

THE effect which that nocturnal encounter had upon me was to cement the impression that in acting as agent for Mr. Philbrick in the purchase of a house Ukridge was on to a good thing. What little I had seen of Hank had convinced me that he was not the man to be finicky about price. He would pay whatever they asked him without hesitation. Ukridge would undoubtedly make enough out of his share of the commission to pay off Dora Mason's hundred without feeling it. Indeed, for the first time in his life he would probably be in possession of that bit of capital of which he was accustomed to speak so wistfully. I ceased, therefore, to worry about Miss Mason's future and concentrated myself on my own troubles.

They would probably have seemed to anyone else minor troubles, but nevertheless they were big enough to depress me. Two days after my meeting with Ukridge and Mr. Philbrick in Pall Mall I had received rather a disturbing letter.

There was a Society paper for which at that time I did occasional work and wished to do more ; and the editor of this paper had sent me a ticket for the forthcoming dance of the Pen and Ink Club, with instructions to let him have a column and a half of bright descriptive matter. It was only after I had digested the pleasant reflection that here was a bit of badly needed cash dropping on me out of a clear sky that I realized why the words Pen and Ink Club seemed to have a familiar ring. It was the club of which Ukridge's aunt Julia was the popular and energetic president, and the thought of a second meeting with that uncomfortable woman filled me with a deep gloom. I had not forgotten—and probably would never forget—my encounter with her in her drawing-room at Wimbledon.

I was not in a financial position, however, to refuse editors their whims, so the thing had to be gone through ; but the prospect damped me, and I was still brooding on it when a violent ring at the front-door bell broke in on my meditations. It was followed by the booming of Ukridge's voice inquiring if I were in. A moment later he had burst into the room. His eyes were wild, his pince-nez at an angle of forty-five, and his collar separated from its stud by a gap of several inches. His whole appearance clearly indicated some blow of fate, and I was not surprised when his first words revealed an aching heart.

" Hank Philbrick," said Ukridge without preamble, " is a son of Belial, a leper, and a worm."

" What's happened now ? "

" He's let me down, the weak-minded Tishbite ! Doesn't want that house in the country after all. My gosh, if Hank Philbrick is the sort of man Canada is producing nowadays, Heaven help the British Empire."

I shelved my petty troubles. They seemed insignificant beside this majestic tragedy.

" What made him change his mind ? " I asked.

" The wobbling, vacillating hell-hound ! I always had a feeling that there was something wrong with that man. He had a nasty, shifty eye. You'll bear me out, laddie, in that ? Haven't I spoken to you a hundred times about his shifty eye ? "

" Certainly. Why did he change his mind ? "

" Didn't I always say he wasn't to be trusted ? "

" Repeatedly. What made him change his mind ? "

Ukridge laughed with a sharp bitterness that nearly cracked the window-pane. His collar leaped like a live thing. Ukridge's collar was always a sort of thermometer that registered the warmth of his feelings. Sometimes, when his temperature was normal, it would remain attached to its stud for minutes at a time ; but the slightest touch of fever sent it jumping

up, and the more he was moved the higher it jumped.

"When I knew Hank out in Canada," he said, "he had the constitution of an ox. Ostriches took his correspondence course in digestion. But directly he comes into a bit of money—— Laddie," said Ukridge earnestly, "when I'm a rich man, I want you to stand at my elbow and watch me very carefully. The moment you see signs of degeneration speak a warning word. Don't let me coddle myself. Don't let me get fussy about my health. Where was I? Oh, yes. Directly this man comes into a bit of money he gets the idea that he's a sort of fragile, delicate flower."

"I shouldn't have thought so from what you were telling me the other night."

"What happened the other night was the cause of all the trouble. Naturally he woke up with a bit of a head."

"I can quite believe it."

"Yes, but, my gosh, what's a head! In the old days he would have gone and worked it off by taking a dose of pain-killer and chopping down half-a-dozen trees. But now what happens? Having all this money, he wouldn't take a simple remedy like that. No, sir! He went to one of those Harley Street sharks who charge a couple of guineas for saying 'Well, how are we this morning?' A fatal move, laddie. Naturally, the shark was all over him. Tapped him here and prodded him there, said he was run down, and finally told him he ought to spend six months in a dry, sunny climate. Recommended Egypt. Egypt, I'll trouble you, for a bloke who lived fifty years thinking that it was a town in Illinois. Well, the long and the short of it is that he's gone off for six months, doesn't want a place in England, and I hope he gets bitten by a crocodile. And the lease all drawn out and ready to sign. Upon my Sam, it's a little hard. Sometimes I wonder whether it's worth while going on struggling."

A SOMBRE silence fell upon us. Ukridge, sunk in gloomy reverie, fumbled absently at his collar stud. I smoked with a heavy heart.

"What will your friend Dora do now?" I said at length.

"That's what's worrying me," said Ukridge, lugubriously. "I've been trying to think of some other way of raising that hundred, but at the moment I don't mind confessing I am baffled. I can see no daylight."

Nor could I. His chance of raising a hundred pounds by any means short of breaking into the Mint seemed slight indeed.

"Odd the way things happen," I said. I gave him the editor's letter. "Look at that."

"What's this?"

"He's sending me to do an article on the Pen and Ink Club dance. If only I had never been to see your aunt——"

"And made such a mess of it."

"I didn't make a mess of it. It just happened that——"

"All right, laddie, all right," said Ukridge, tonelessly. "Don't let's split straws. The fact remains, whether it was your fault or not, the thing was a complete frost. What were you saying?"

"I was saying that, if only I had never been to your aunt, I could have met her in a perfectly natural way at this dance."

"Done Young Disciple stuff," said Ukridge, seizing on the idea. "Rubbed in the fact that you could do her a bit of good by boosting her in the paper."

"And asked her to re-engage Miss Mason as her secretary."

Ukridge fiddled with the letter.

"You don't think even now——"

I was sorry for him and sorrier for Dora Mason, but on this point I was firm.

"No, I don't."

"But consider, laddie," urged Ukridge. "At this dance she may well be in malleable mood. The lights, the music, the laughter, the jollity."

"No," I said. "It can't be done. I can't back out of going to the affair, because if I did I'd never get any more work to do for this paper. But I'll tell you one thing. I mean to keep quite clear of your aunt. That's final. I dream of her in the night sometimes and wake up screaming. And in any case it wouldn't be any use my tackling her. She wouldn't listen to me. It's too late. You weren't there that afternoon at Wimbledon, but you can take it from me that I'm not one of her circle of friends."

"That's the way it always happens," sighed Ukridge. "Everything comes too late. Well, I'll be popping off. Lot of heavy thinking to do, laddie. Lot of heavy thinking."

And he left without borrowing even a cigar, a sure sign that his resilient spirit was crushed beyond recuperation.

THE dance of the Pen and Ink Club was held, like so many functions of its kind, at the Lotus Rooms, Knightsbridge, that barrack-like building which seems to exist only for these sad affairs. The Pen and Ink evidently went in for quality in its membership rather than quantity; and the band, when I arrived, was giving out the peculiarly tinny sound which bands always produce in very large rooms that are only one-sixth part full. The air was chilly and

desolate, and a general melancholy seemed to prevail. The few couples dancing on the broad acres of floor appeared sombre and introspective, as if they were meditating on the body upstairs and realizing that all flesh is as grass. Around the room on those gilt chairs which are only seen in subscription-dance halls weird beings were talking in undertones, probably about the trend of Scandinavian literature. In fact, the only bright spot on the whole gloomy business was that it occurred before the era of tortoiseshell-rimmed spectacles.

That curious grey hopelessness which always afflicts me when I am confronted with literary people in the bulk was not lightened by the reflection that at any moment I might encounter Miss Julia Ukridge. I moved warily about the room, keenly alert, like a cat that has wandered into a strange alley and sees in every shadow the potential hurler of a half-brick. I could envisage nothing but awkwardness and embarrassment springing from such a meeting. The lesson which I had drawn from my previous encounter with her was that happiness for me lay in keeping as far away from Miss Julia Ukridge as possible.

"Excuse me!"

My precautions had been in vain. She had sneaked up on me from behind.

"Good evening," I said.

It is never any good rehearsing these scenes in advance. They always turn out so differently. I had been assuming, when I slunk into this hall, that if I met this woman I should feel the same shrinking sense of guilt and inferiority which had proved so disintegrating at Wimbledon. I had omitted to make allowances for the fact that that painful episode had taken place on her own ground, and that right from the start my conscience had been far from clear. To-night the conditions were different.

"Are you a member of the Pen and Ink Club?" said Ukridge's aunt, frostily.

Her stony blue eyes were fixed on me with an expression that was not exactly loathing, but rather a cold and critical contempt. So might a fastidious cook look at a black-beetle in her kitchen.

"No," I replied, "I am not."

I felt bold and hostile. This woman gave me a pain in the neck, and I endeavoured to express as much in the language of the eyes.

"Then will you please tell me what you are doing here? This is a private dance."

One has one's moments. I felt much as I presume Battling Billson must have felt in his recent fight with Alf Todd, when he perceived his antagonist advancing upon him wide-open, inviting the knock-out punch.

"The editor of *Society* sent me a ticket. He wanted an article written about it."

If I was feeling like Mr. Billson, Ukridge's aunt must have felt very like Mr. Todd. I could see that she was shaken. In a flash I had changed from a black-beetle to a godlike creature, able, if conciliated, to do a bit of that log-rolling which is so dear to the heart of the female novelist. And she had not conciliated me. Of all sad words of tongue or pen, the saddest are these: It might have been. It is too much to say that her jaw fell, but certainly the agony of this black moment caused her lips to part in a sort of twisted despair. But there was good stuff in this woman. She rallied gamely.

"A Press ticket," she murmured.

"A Press ticket," I echoed.

"May I see it?"

"Certainly."

"Thank you."

"Not at all."

She passed on.

I RESUMED my inspection of the dancers with a lighter heart. In my present uplifted mood they did not appear so bad as they had a few minutes back. Some of them, quite a few of them, looked almost human. The floor was fuller now, and whether owing to my imagination or not, the atmosphere seemed to have taken on a certain cheeriness. The old suggestion of a funeral still lingered, but now it was possible to think of it as a less formal, rather jollier funeral. I began to be glad that I had come.

"Excuse me!"

I had thought that I was finished with this sort of thing for the evening, and I turned with a little impatience. It was a refined tenor voice that had addressed me, and it was a refined tenor-looking man whom I saw. He was young and fattish, with a Jovian coiffure and pince-nez attached to a black cord.

"Pardon me," said this young man, "but are you a member of the Pen and Ink Club?"

My momentary annoyance vanished, for it suddenly occurred to me that, looked at in the proper light, it was really extremely flattering, this staunch refusal on the part of these people to entertain the belief that I could be one of them. No doubt, I felt, they were taking up the position of the proprietor of a certain night-club, who, when sued for defamation of character by a young lady to whom he had refused admittance on the ground that she was not a fit person to associate with his members, explained to

the court that he had meant it as a compliment.

"No, thank Heaven!" I replied.

"Then what——"

"Press ticket," I explained.

"Press ticket? What paper?"

"*Society.*"

There was nothing of the Julia Ukridge spirit in this young man, no ingrained pride which kept him aloof and outwardly indifferent. He beamed like the rising sun. He grasped my arm and kneaded it. He gambolled about me like a young lamb in the springtime.

"My dear fellow!" he exclaimed, exuberantly, and clutched my arm more firmly, lest even now I might elude him. "My dear fellow, I really must apologize. I would not have questioned you, but there are some persons present who were not invited. I met a man only a moment ago who said that he had bought a ticket. Some absurd mistake. There were no tickets for sale. I was about to question him further, but he disappeared into the crowd and I have not seen him since. This is a quite private dance, open only to members of the club. Come with me, my dear fellow, and I will give you a few particulars which you may find of use for your article."

HE led me resolutely into a small room off the floor, closed the door to prevent escape, and, on the principle on which you rub a cat's paws with butter to induce it to settle down in a new home, began to fuss about with whisky and cigarettes.

"Do, do sit down."

I sat down.

"First, about this club. The Pen and Ink Club is the only really exclusive organization of its kind in London. We pride ourselves on the fact. We are to the literary world what Brooks's and the Carlton are to the social. Members are elected solely by invitation. Election, in short, you understand, is in the nature of an accolade. We have exactly one hundred members, and we include only those writers who in our opinion possess vision."

"And the big, broad, flexible outlook?"

"I beg your pardon?"

"Nothing."

"The names of most of those here tonight must be very familiar to you."

"I know Miss Ukridge, the president," I said.

A faint, almost imperceptible shadow passed over the stout young man's face. He removed his pince-nez and polished them with a touch of disfavour. There was a rather flat note in his voice.

"Ah, yes," he said, "Julia Ukridge A dear soul, but, between ourselves, strictly between ourselves, not a great deal of help in an executive capacity."

"No?"

"No. In confidence, I do all the work. I am the club's secretary. My name, by the way, is Charlton Prout. You may know it?"

He eyed me wistfully, and I felt that something ought to be done about him. He was much too sleek, and he had no right to do his hair like that.

"Of course," I said. "I have read all your books."

"Really?"

"'A Shriek in the Night.' 'Who Killed Jasper Bossom?'—all of them."

He stiffened austerely.

"You must be confusing me with some other—ah—writer," he said. "My work is on somewhat different lines. The reviewers usually describe the sort of thing I do as Pastels in Prose. My best-liked book, I believe, is 'Grey Myrtles.' Dunstable's brought it out last year. It was exceedingly well received. And I do a good deal of critical work for the better class of review." He paused. "If you think it would interest your readers," he said, with a deprecating wave of the hand, "I will send you a photograph. Possibly your editor would like to use it."

"I bet he would."

"A photograph somehow seems to—as it were—set off an article of this kind."

"That," I replied, cordially, "is what it doesn't do nothing else but."

"And you won't forget 'Grey Myrtles.' Well, if you have finished your cigarette, we might be returning to the ballroom. These people rather rely on me to keep things going, you know."

A burst of music greeted us as he opened the door, and even in that first moment I had an odd feeling that it sounded different. That tinny sound had gone from it. And as we debouched from behind a potted palm and came in sight of the floor, I realized why.

The floor was full. It was crammed, jammed, and overflowing. Where couples had moved as single spies, they were now in battalions. The place was alive with noise and laughter. These people might, as my companion had said, be relying on him to keep things going, but they seemed to have been getting along uncommonly well in his absence. I paused and surveyed the mob in astonishment. I could not make the man's figures balance.

"I thought you said the Pen and Ink Club had only a hundred members."

The secretary was fumbling for his glasses. He had an almost Ukridge-like knack of

dropping his pince-nez in moments of emotion.

"It—it has," he stammered.

"Well, reading from left to right, I make it nearer seven hundred."

"I cannot understand it."

"Perhaps they have been having a new election and letting in some writers without vision," I suggested.

I was aware of Miss Ukridge bearing down upon us, bristling.

"Mr. Prout!"

The talented young author of "Grey Myrtles" leaped convulsively.

"Yes, Miss Ukridge?"

"Who are all these people?"

"I—I don't know," said the talented young man.

"You don't know! It's your business to know. You are the secretary of the club. I suggest that you find out as quickly as possible who they are and what they imagine they are doing here."

The goaded secretary had something of the air of a man leading a forlorn hope, and his ears had turned bright pink, but he went at it bravely. A serene-looking man with a light moustache and a made-up tie was passing, and he sprang upon him like a stoutish leopard.

"Excuse me, sir."

"Eh?"

"Will you kindly—would you mind—pardon me if I ask——"

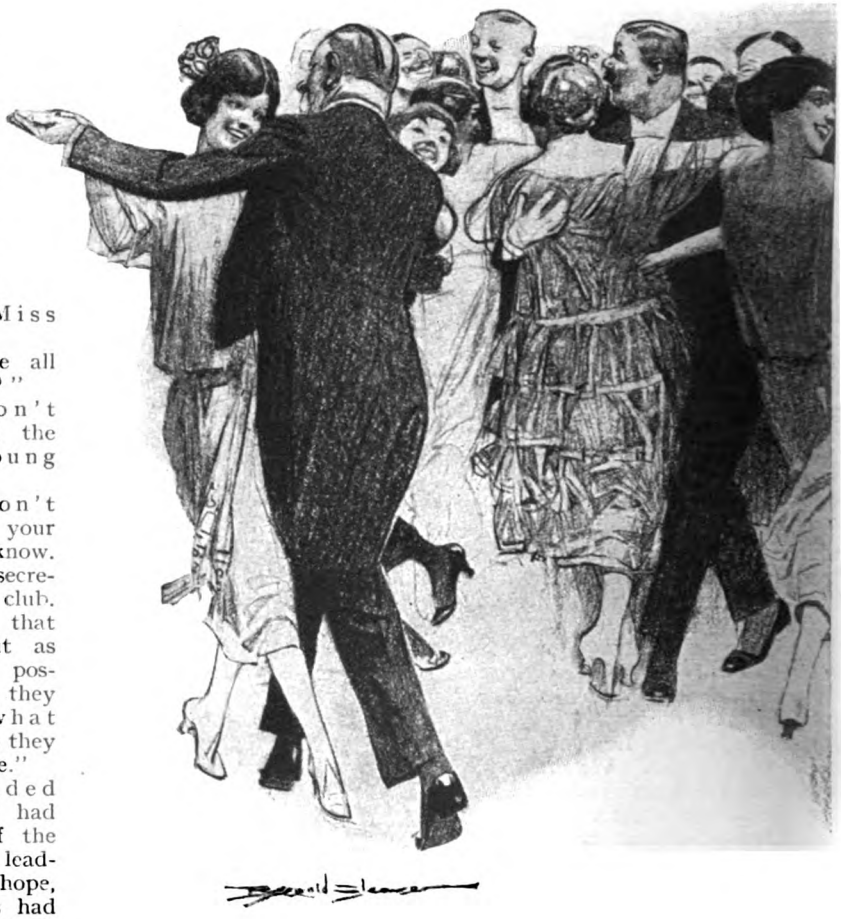
"What are you doing here?" demanded Miss Ukridge, curtly, cutting in on his flounderings with a masterful impatience. "How do you come to be at this dance?"

The man seemed surprised.

"Who, me?" he said. "I came with the rest of 'em."

"What do you mean, the rest of them?"

"The members of the Warner's Stores Social and Outing Club."



The two secretaries eyed each other warily, like two dogs.

Mr. Prout. "This is a

"But this is the dance of the Pen and Ink Club," bleated Mr. Prout.

"Some mistake," said the other, confidently. "It's a bloomer of some kind. Here," he added, beckoning to a portly gentleman of middle age who was bustling by, "you'd better have a talk with our hon.

sec. He'll know. Mr. Biggs, this gentleman seems to think there's been some mistake about this dance."

Mr. Biggs stopped, looked, and listened.

"I'm the secretary of the Warner's Stores Social and Outing Club," said Mr. Biggs.

The two secretaries eyed each other warily, like two dogs.

"What are you doing here?" moaned private dance."

Seen at close range, he had a forceful, determined air. I liked his looks.

"May I introduce Mr. Charlton Prout?" I said. "Author of 'Grey Myrtles.' Mr. Prout," I went on, as this seemed to make little or no sensation, "is the secretary of the Pen and Ink Club."

"But what are you doing here?" moaned Mr. Prout, in a voice like the wind in the tree-tops. "This is a private dance."

"Nothing of the kind," said Mr. Biggs, resolutely. "I personally bought tickets for all my members."

"But there were no tickets for sale. The dance was for the exclusive——"

"It's perfectly evident that you have come to the wrong hall or chosen the wrong evening," snapped Miss Ukridge, abruptly superseding Mr. Prout in the supreme command. I did not blame her for feeling a little impatient. The secretary was handling the campaign very feebly.

The man behind the Warner's Stores Social and Outing Club cocked a polite but belligerent eye at this new enemy. I liked his looks more than ever. This was a man who would fight it out on these lines if it took all the summer.

"I have not the honour of this lady's acquaintance," he said, smoothly, but with a gradually reddening eye. The Biggses, that eye seemed to say, were loath to war upon women, but if the women asked for it they could be men of iron, ruthless. "Might I ask who this lady is?"

"This is our president."

"Happy to meet you, ma'am."

"Miss Ukridge," added Mr. Prout, completing the introduction.

The name appeared to strike a chord in Mr. Biggs. He bent forward and a gleam of triumph came into his eyes.

"Ukridge, did you say?"

"Miss Julia Ukridge."

"Then it's all right," said Mr. Biggs, briskly. "There's been no mistake. I bought our tickets from a gentleman named Ukridge. I got seven hundred at five bob apiece, reduction for taking a quantity and ten per cent. discount for cash. If Mr. Ukridge acted contrary to instructions, it's too late to remedy the matter now. You should have made it clear to him what you wanted him to do before he went and did it."

And with this extremely sound sentiment the honorary secretary of the Warner's Stores Social and Outing Club turned on the heel of his shining dancing-pump and was gone. And I, too, sauntered away. There seemed nothing to keep me. As I went, I looked over my shoulder. The author of "Grey Myrtles" appeared to be entering upon the opening stages of what promised to be a painful *tête-à-tête*. My heart bled for him. If ever a man was blameless Mr. Prout was, but the president of the Pen and Ink Club was not the woman to allow a trifle like that to stand in her way.

"OH, it just came to me, laddie," said Stanley Featherstonehaugh Ukridge modestly, interviewed later by our representative. "You know me. One moment mind a blank, then—*bing!*—some dashed colossal idea. It was your showing me that ticket for the dance that set me thinking. And I happened to meet a bloke in a pub who worked in Warner's Stores. Nice fellow, with a fair amount of pimples. Told me their Social and Outing Club was working up for its semi-annual beano. One thing led to another, I got him to introduce me to the hon. sec., and we came to terms. I liked the man, laddie. Great treat to meet a bloke with a good, level business head. We settled the details in no time. Well, I don't mind telling you, Corky my boy, that at last for the first time in many years I begin to see my way clear. I've got a bit of capital now. After sending poor little Dora her hundred, I shall have at least fifty quid left over. Fifty quid! My dear old son, you may take it from me that there's no limit—absolutely no limit—to what I can accomplish with fifty o'goblins in my kick. From now on I see my way clear. My feet are on solid ground. The world, laddie, is my oyster. Nothing can stop me from making a colossal fortune. I'm not exaggerating, old horse, a colossal fortune. Why, by a year from now I calculate, at a conservative estimate——"

Our representative then withdrew.

(Another story by P. G. Wodehouse will appear next month.)

RESULT OF THE COMPETITION FOR ARTISTS.

IN a recent issue we published a short story and invited artists to send us two drawings to illustrate it. Several hundred were sent in, and the judges have made the following awards :—

FIRST PRIZE, £50:

J. R. BURGESS, 19, Woodgrange Gardens, N. Finchley, London, N.12.

SECOND PRIZE, £30:

ALAN SHEPHARD, 49, Waverley Road, Kenilworth.

THIRD PRIZE, £20:

F. A. MOULD, 13a, Poynter's Avenue, Thorneywood, Nottingham.

The most dramatic incidents of the story are the chloroforming of a well-known actor in his dressing-room by a thief, who, dressed in the actor's costume and made up to resemble him, takes his place on the stage in order to strangle the leading lady and rob her of her pearls. These have naturally been selected for illustration by most of the competitors, and the first prize-winner's two drawings are reproduced herewith.

The SPIN OF THE WHEEL

by

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN CAMERON

MARCH 3RD.—Here we are, then. As, from where I sit at this writing-table, I turn my eyes to the left I see, cream-white in this blessed sun, the sugar-icing façade of the Casino, and opposite it, against a background of green palms, a large white and gold *café* with a multitude of outside tables, quite summerlike under sun-umbrellas; if I glance to the right, through the windows on the other side of this broadly-curving corner of the room, I see the blue Mediterranean sparkling under a zephyr breeze. And as I look, a silly old song, popular when I was a boy, keeps repeating itself in my head :—

"As I walk along the Bois de Boolong
With an independent air,
You can hear the girls declare
He must be a millionaire;
You can hear them sigh, and wish to die,
You can see them wink the other eye
At the man who broke the Bank at Monte Carlo!"

Something like that it goes—I can't remember it exactly. Does one ever break the bank, I wonder? Funny how a secret hope I shouldn't have the audacity to declare to myself sneaks up the backstairs into one's consciousness!

Some apartment! The usual occupants, I presume, arrive with a valet—I saw the manager glance sharply at my simplicity of baggage. However, he was, of course, far too sublimely aristocratic to betray the slightest hint of a doubt. I telegraphed for the best apartment available—and I have it. It was already reserved for me—"*Monsieur Geoffrey Cludd—numéro quatorze*," he told the page-boy without a moment of hesitation, as though he carried in his head the allotment of every room in the hotel. Wonderful fellows, these hotel managers! I'm superstitious enough to be glad, though, that my number is fourteen and not thirteen. If I'd found myself shown to the next-door room I should have felt it a pretty ugly omen. But perhaps they don't have a number thirteen, and this room is really—— Shut up!

I catch myself smiling, a cynical little smile over clenched teeth, as I glance around me at this extremely good luxury, and see through it, like a fade-out at the movies, that abhorrent little bedroom in the purlieus of Bloomsbury. Was it only the night before last I slept there? It was for the last time. I don't go back. That's one thing utterly certain in a most uncertain world. As for this pretty little hotel bill I'm incurring, I understand that the Casino authorities not only provide the funeral but pay the hotel expenses of defunct unlucky gamblers. I see no reason why I should stint myself on their behalf. On the other hand, if—*'shh!* that's asking for trouble—I don't in the least mind paying the most extravagant of hotel bills. And in the meantime, whatever happens, for a few days at least—I *live!*

Why am I writing all this down? I never was prig enough to keep a diary in my life. *Imprimis*, because I'm terribly lonely. If there was a soul in the world I could write

Copyright, 1923, by F. Britten Austin.

to, I'd write him or her a letter. But there isn't. As for that precious crowd that so promptly made themselves scarce when the old man found it advisable to do a little target practice on himself just at the time when a grateful country "axed" a good many better men than myself in mid-career, if—*'shh!*—but *if!*—it will give me the greatest pleasure in life to show them the door when they come crowding in on me again. Poor old man! He did his damnedest. He never meant to leave me in the soup. Up to the very last, I fancy, he thought he'd manage to pull out. Pity he hadn't told me—a worse pity that he hadn't brought me into the business, and given me a chance to earn my living. It's a poor qualification for a man over thirty when about the only thing he knows is to shout: "Company—Tshun! Carry on, sergeant-major."

Seems a long time ago now. How many years did I go tramping up and down that infernal City, pushing open one office door after another, hearing in advance their curt "Sorry. We have no vacancy"? It seems years—one of those nightmares which go on and on for ever in their hopeless horror. Actually it was six months. Six hideous months in which I watched my cash melt and dwindle, in which I felt my soul get more and more down at heel, as well as my shoes. It seems in another existence, but it was only four days ago that I sat in that bedroom looking over my pass-book and found that I had got down to my last fifty. And when that went, as the rest had gone? It wasn't good enough—it just wasn't good enough. I can hear myself saying it as I sucked at my pipe.

I had, besides, a gold watch, a couple of sets of pearl studs—from old Aunt Caroline, bless her! she always bought in Bond Street—one or two other trinkets—say, another fifty in all. I sat looking at them, I remember, and imagined Monte to myself—not a bit like it actually is as I saw it coming up from the station this morning. Actually, the whole caboodle, sold, not pawned, produced seventy, not fifty—hundred and twenty in all. First-class sleeper here, *single*. Net balance, one hundred, which I have just pushed into this drawer at this very table at which I am sitting. I sat down to lock them up, along with the other article—the little fellow that was heavy in my hip-pocket all the way, safe from the prying eyes of *douaniers*—and finding myself sitting in front of paper and a pen I began to write almost automatically, like talking to myself. Queer! But I suppose I'm a bit strung up. Well, if that little wad of notes does its duty, it will be interesting to read this afterwards—I often wish I'd kept a diary of my sensations when we went "over the top" in the war, and we're going over the top now, old bean, if ever we did. If, on the other hand, my luck's out, this record might have some sort of value for one of the sensational Sunday papers. Unfortunately, though, I shouldn't get the cash. I shall be dead. That's the size of it. Savvy?

I HAD a delightful journey out, in a curious grim peace with myself, all my humiliations left behind me once for all. I had one of those new blue single-berth sleepers, and I didn't speak to a soul all the way. Yes, I did, though. I exchanged a couple of words on the scenery with that girl who was standing in the corridor, looking out of the window. I bumped into her as the train swayed. Her face gave me a queer little shock as she turned it on me—a pure oval of exquisitely carved features, with large questioning eyes that seemed to hesitate upon one, making sure of sympathy. I had an absurd impulse to ask her on the spot what was the matter—could I help? I suppressed it, of course. I have not come out here to mix myself up with the eternal feminine. That's finished with. I'm here for one very definite single-minded purpose, and I'm not going to complicate it with any other consideration.

What a crew she was with, though! I saw them on the station (they got out here): the fat woman, heavily furred, thick with paint; the big man with the nose; the other fellow with the diamond and the mean little furtive eyes—I don't know which was the husband. What the devil is a girl like that doing with such a crowd? Like a troop of Hebraic satyrs leading about a Madonna! That's poetic, dashed if it isn't. And quite enough of it, my lad. It's none of your business. You mind your own. To-day is Friday. If you wake up alive on the morning of Saturday week, you may make love to any girl in the world who takes your fancy. Until then—you're under suspended sentence, and it's blind and dumb you are to every kind of woman.

Later.—Well, we've made our reconnaissance in force—and been repulsed. Enemy resistance very strong. Quite like old times, when we felt for the Boche line at Mont St. Quentin. Let's put it all down.

My first instinct as I left the hotel this afternoon was to go straight across to the Casino and test my luck. I refrained deliberately, with an effort, because I felt myself shaky with suppressed anxiety. And I don't propose to be anxious. If this is the last week I have to live, I propose to enjoy it. And when I go into that Casino

to fight for my life, it's going to be with a clear head and steady nerves. So I made myself turn to the right from the hotel and admire the view. But all the time, as I looked doggedly, I was conscious of the pull of that elaborately ornate, cream-white building behind my back. At last I caved in. After all, this was what I had come for. I would test my—*veine*, I think they call it. If good, I'd go on until I felt the tide turning. If bad—I'd go on until I had lost five hundred francs. That was the limit I set for myself, to be rigidly observed. So I decided as I went in.

And then, quite steadily and very regularly, I lost my five hundred francs. It took precisely one hour and a half, for my stakes were small. I'm not *flinging* money on that green table until I catch a hint of a smile on the blind goddess's inscrutable face. I guess she was testing my nerve this afternoon, just as I was testing her mood. Evidently, we can both be obstinate.

BUT that's not the end of a perfect day. At dinner to-night, in the immense *salle-à-manger*, white and gold and palm-filled, I suddenly looked up to see that girl. I didn't know they had come to this hotel. There they were, that horrible woman, those two carrion-beaked men—and that Madonna-like creature, beautiful, wistful, silent. Other men were eyeing her. She took no notice of them. Her big eyes were fixed steadily on me—I realized it with a peculiar little shock—as if in some intensely-sped telepathic appeal. The lids went down over them sharply as she met my glance. I thought I saw a little colour come into her white face. For a moment I was held in a sort of spell, where I felt my heart beginning to thump—then I pulled myself together. Nothing of that sort for you, Geoffrey, my lad, this side of Saturday week! I had finished my meal, and I got up from my table and went straight out of the room without another glance at her.

I took my coffee over at the Café de Paris, away from the hotel, and found myself puzzling over that girl instead of my own sufficiently interesting affairs. Who and what was she? A decoy? Her companions had "wrong 'un" written all over them. Yet it seemed impossible that she could lend herself—anyway, it was none of my business. I shut off my thoughts with a snap, went across to the Casino.

There, once more, quite steadily and regularly, I lost my five hundred francs. I was two hours over it, for sometimes I won a few back. Half-way through the performance I looked up to see that precious trio, the fat woman and the two men, seated at my table. They were winning, of course. They would! I glanced round for the girl, but she had evidently not accompanied them. They were still playing when, having seen my last counter raked in by the croupier, I quitted.

Steadying my nerves with a much-needed cigarette, I went across to the hotel. The lounge was deserted. I sat down in a secluded corner to figure things out. It had been a bad start. This first day I had lost a thousand francs—twenty good English pounds at the current rate. Five days of that would finish me. And for one minimum week I was and am determined to live. Henceforth, my lad, your limit is six hundred francs in any one day *until the last*—and then you go in to the last cent. I had just arrived at this decision when I saw her on the threshold of the lounge.

She stood for a moment, framed in the doorway, timid and beautiful in her simple black evening dress, glancing about her as though in search of someone. I was the only person in the place. And all of a sudden, as her eyes rested on me in my corner, I realized, with that same queer little jump inside me that I had had at dinner, that it was me she was looking for. She came across to me. I got on to my feet, feeling ridiculously awkward. What did she want with me? Perhaps to ask where her companions were? I plunged at that as she stood, hesitating in a sudden timidity, in front of me. To look into those eyes set a man's senses in a whirl.

"Your friends are still at the Casino, I think." I hope I sounded polite.

"I know," she said, in that rich, low-toned voice I remembered from the train. I could feel her eyes looking not merely into my face, but searching my very soul. I was glad in that moment that I've always been a pretty straight sort of chap. Had I been otherwise, those eyes would have found me out. She did not smile. "I thought you might be here," she added, seriously. "I looked in a little time ago—twice."

I was utterly bewildered.

"Won't you sit down?" My invitation was as lamely awkward as a self-conscious schoolboy's. Why on earth did she want to look for me? What was the matter?

"Can I help you in any way?" I asked.

The faintest smile came on her face.

"I was waiting for you to ask that," she replied, "ever since you spoke to me in the train." The large eyes came full on me. "I knew you would. And I knew that I could trust you."

Inwardly I jibbed. At any other time—

but now, in this crucial, all-absorbing week of life or death ! I was not in the mood for knight-errantry.

"What's the matter ? "

She was still looking at me.

"I want a friend."

matic upstairs, lying locked in the drawer of this table at which I am writing. "After that——" I shrugged my shoulders. "But you haven't told me what is wrong."

She was about to speak, when I heard a murmur of voices behind the glass door leading to the hall.

"*'Shh !*" She put a finger to her lips,

I exchanged a couple of words on the scenery with **that girl who was standing in the corridor. I bumped into her as the train swayed.**

I kept a tight hand on myself.

"Yes ? " I said, cautiously but encouragingly.

"Are you here for some time ? " I noticed her eyes glance up to the clock, stray uneasily towards the door.

"Certainly for a week," I replied, with a grim little subtlety of humour that was for myself alone. I remembered my auto-

darted to a seat at a table a little way off, picked up an illustrated paper, was apparently absorbed in it.

That engaging trio came into the lounge, chattering to each other with thick voices. They were evidently surprised to see her.

"Is your headache better, my dear ? " asked the woman, with the oily ingratiating smile with which her ancestors had certainly sold old clothes in Petticoat Lane.

The girl looked up, her face white and expressionless.

" It passed off, Mrs. Franks. I was waiting for you in case you might want me."

The trio sat down at her table, ordered whiskies-and-sodas. No one paid any attention to me. I got up and walked out, came to my room, where I have just written this. What the devil——

March 4th.—Day number two! We are sixteen hundred francs to the bad. I have the most diabolical luck. I played this afternoon and this evening. Lost three hundred francs each time. " From him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath." And conversely. An obviously well-to-do fellow at my table won so much that his pockets could hardly hold it at the end. Curiously enough, when I followed his lead for a time and staked on the same numbers, he lost. I left off, not wanting to spoil his luck. It gives one a twinge of superstition. I could not help opening the drawer for a glance at my neat little automatic before sitting down to write. Is that, after all, going to be the way out? Nonsense! We have still five more days. Pull your socks up, my lad.

As to that girl (in my dreams last night I went through the most fantastic adventures with her)—nothing. We have not exchanged a word. She scarcely glanced at me in the dining-room. All the time she has been with that loathly trio. They have picked up a fourth—a weedy fellow with a Bond Street tailor and a face like a rabbit. He was all eyes for the girl. The two gentlemen with the noses were all eyes for *him*, despite their careful carelessness of manner. The fat woman sat and simpered, exuding a greasy self-satisfaction. And, when she had to, the girl smiled, as the picture of a Madonna might smile—a miracle every time—but, well, the smile of a picture.

What's the game? I deprived the Casino of twenty francs to ask a waiter a few questions. He knew only the names of the trio, Mr. and Mrs. Franks, Mr. Braham—the tall one. The girl? Miss Maynard; he shrugged his shoulders to express the limit of his knowledge. The fourth? *Milord* Shrimpton. I seem to remember something about that young gentleman—a recent heir to a million, or words to that effect. Well, it's none of my business. I've got all I want to think about.

March 7th.—Day number five! I'm beginning to feel like that chap in one of Edgar Allan Poe's stories who watched the walls, roof, and floor gradually, slowly, and murderously contracting the cubic space of his prison. Two more days! It's extraordinary that the more desperately a man wants a touch of good luck, the more it is tantalizingly withheld. I have lost three thousand four hundred francs up to date, six hundred each of these last three days. I put it on record, it wanted a bit of courage to break off when I had reached my self-imposed limit—the chance that the luck might turn with the next spin of the roulette almost too tempting to be resisted.

As for that girl, I haven't had another word with her, not even a glance of understanding, and I'm *glad*. The impression she made on me is beginning to fade off—at least, I hope it is. She's vivid enough in my dreams, too vivid. It gives one a queer feeling, in the light of day, to see her pass without a hint of recognition. At meal-times she sits like a carven statue, with that poor rabbit-faced fool staring at her as though mesmerized and the eyes of the trio glittering as they almost wink at one another.

My friend the waiter thought fit to come to me this morning with another twenty-francs-worth of information. Apparently he mistakes me for a detective of some sort. It is now explained why I have seen none of them in the Casino these last few nights. Each evening there's been a select little gambling party in the private suite occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Franks. The *milord* was there, of course. And *mademoiselle?* Mademoiselle also—no, she did not gamble—but the fat woman made her sing at the piano and the *milord* was *vraiment enchanté*—that was before they got out the cards. My waiter ministered to the party with whiskies-and-sodas all the evening, particularly to the rabbit-faced *milord*. " *Et, monsieur, comme elle chante, cette jeune dame—comme un ange!* " he added, with unnecessary enthusiasm. The whole thing turned me a little sick. She is the decoy, then, after all—and whatever her first repugnance, if repugnance it had been that made her speak to me, she now acquiesces.

March 8th—and Day the Sixth.—I would not write this if I had a chance of sleep or a pal I could talk to. It's long past midnight. I've been looking out of my window over the sea, yellowed with the setting moon, until I've got chilled. Better sit down, talk to myself on paper, get my thoughts clear to myself, than lie in bed and stare at the darkness with my head on fire. And I'll begin at the beginning.

I lost my six hundred francs as usual, of course—lost them steadily, winning back a few every now and then, but losing regularly on balance, until the last was gone. I shut off a tempting demon inside me that egged me on to continue, risk everything, finish it one way or the other to-night. Seven days I

had sworn to myself I would have, and I held firm. I walked out of that Casino, picked up my overcoat at the *vestiaire*, lit a cigarette, and went out into the moonlit night.

It was a night in which a poet might write immortal verse. I cannot describe the impression it made on me. I found myself thrilling with it as I absorbed it. This time to-morrow? To-morrow, either my luck would miraculously change *or*—— I gazed out over that moonlit harbour and tried to make it real to myself that it would look just the same after I was tucked away in whatever obscure spot it is that they bury the unlucky ones.

I don't know what it was that made me turn my head—but I recognized her at once, with that same queer little inward shock, obscured though was her face by the shadow from her hat and her figure shapeless in a heavy cloak. She came towards me.

"I felt that I should find you here," she said.

I composed myself to sternness as I looked into her face, armoured myself against her eyes. I was polite enough to behave as if I had no doubts of her.

"You ought not to be alone out here like this," I replied, ignoring the appeal in her voice. "Let me take you back to the hotel."

She made a vehement little gesture of revolt.

"No, no! I cannot go back to the hotel—I will never go back!" Despite my scepticism, her agitation puzzled me. Was I misjudging her?

"What's the matter?" I said.

She looked at me, and once more I surrendered to the truthfulness of those eyes.

"You promised to be my friend?"

FOR all the overwhelming spell of her, it was all I could do not to shrug my shoulders in the irony of this appeal. She could not have picked a more hopelessly useless person in the whole of Monte Carlo. I had no illusions about my eleventh-hour chance of luck. I was as good as a dead man already. However——

"I'll do anything I can to help you," I said. "But I am afraid you have chosen a very poor reed on which to lean."

"No, no!" she replied, with emphatic certainty. "It is you who can help me—and only you! I felt it when I first saw you in the train."

I'm afraid I *did* shrug my shoulders then.

"Look here," I said, "you mustn't be seen standing talking to me here. Someone in the hotel might spot you and think things. Let us go for a walk, and you can tell me all about it. Come along."

We walked down the long slope which leads to the lower town, and on the way I got her story. She was an orphan, of course—she would be! It was just like the perverse cussedness of Fate to thrust such a dangerously beautiful creature utterly unprotected into the world. All her life she had lived in the country, somewhere down in Somerset. Her mother had died when she was a baby. Her father had died six months ago, and left her without a bean. The solicitor had told her that when the furniture was sold it would scarcely be sufficient to pay his debts. At first she had gone to live with friends, acting as governess to their two little girls. But the master of the house had begun to pay her attentions—she was evasive on this point, but I gathered that he must have been a thoroughly objectionable cad—and things had got decidedly difficult. Then she had seen in the newspaper the advertisement of a lady who desired a young girl as a travelling companion. She had scraped together her last few shillings, and gone up to London to be interviewed by her prospective employer. Mrs. Franks, of course!

"At first I thought she was awfully nice," said the girl, looking at me as though fearful I should misjudge her for taking up with such a gang. "She engaged me on the spot, although she had had crowds of other applicants, she told me. And she was so kind. She took me round to all the best London shops and bought me the most beautiful new clothes."

"Did she?" I commented, ironically. I had a pretty shrewd idea that Mrs. Franks was not a woman to waste her money. "And Mr. Franks and the other fellow—were they on the scene?"

"We came away to Monte Carlo almost at once," she replied. "I only saw Mr. Franks the day before we started, and Mr. Braham joined us at the railway station. It was in the train that—that I began to have a feeling that they were not very nice people."

"Indeed!" I remarked. We had passed along the quay-front of the lower town, were now ascending, mechanically, without heeding where we were going, the steep way that leads through the old fortified gateways to the town of Monaco.

"Even then I wasn't sure—but somehow I felt afraid, though I can't tell you what it was I was afraid of. Mrs. Franks was most kind and considerate—she's vulgar, of course, but I forgave her that for her goodheartedness, as I thought. She treated me more like her own daughter than a paid companion. It was the conversation between Mr. Franks and Mr. Braham that first made me uneasy. They were talking about people

they expected to meet at Monte Carlo—and whether they were 'likely' people or not, and how much this or the other one might be 'good for.' Mrs. Franks snubbed them once or twice for such talk in front of me. And then I had a dreadful shock. I had been dozing in my corner, and she must have thought I was still asleep. She began to whisper to them in such a cunning, wicked way that my blood ran cold. I got up and went out into the corridor. Then I saw you, and something seemed to say to me: 'Here's a friend!' And then you spoke to me."

We were now well up the height, the many lights of Monte Carlo scintillating across the moon-misty bay. There was a seat in one of the embrasures of these seventeenth-century fortifications.

"I think we've gone far enough," I said. "Let's sit down." We did so. "Now tell me exactly what is wrong. They've been using you as a decoy, I suppose, for that rabbit-faced fellow. Has he lost much?"

She glanced at me.

"You guessed, then?"

"My dear young lady, your companions are fairly obvious," I remarked.

She stared out across the bay.

"What you must have thought of me!" she mused. The exquisite beauty of her profile gave me a feeling of rarefied air inside my chest. I reacted against it.

"Never mind what I thought of you. I confess you puzzled me," I said, rather roughly. "But we understand each other now. Things have come to a head, I presume?"

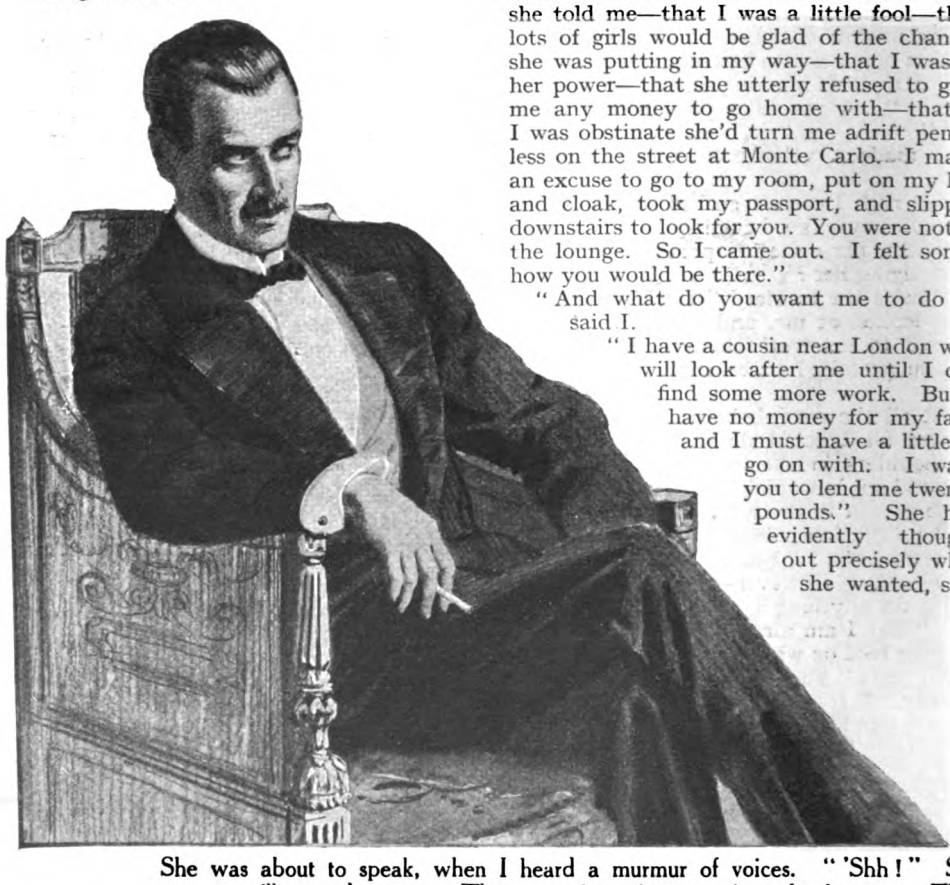
"To-night," she murmured. "I did not fully understand until to-night the part I was being made to play. I went to Mrs. Franks at once and demanded to be sent home." She shuddered at an evidently unpleasant reminiscence.

"What happened?"

"At first she coaxed and wheedled me, trying to persuade me that it was all my imagination. And then, quite suddenly, when she saw it was all no use, she turned on me like a fiend. She frightened me. She told me that I would have to do whatever she told me—that I was a little fool—that lots of girls would be glad of the chances she was putting in my way—that I was in her power—that she utterly refused to give me any money to go home with—that if I was obstinate she'd turn me adrift penniless on the street at Monte Carlo. I made an excuse to go to my room, put on my hat and cloak, took my passport, and slipped downstairs to look for you. You were not in the lounge. So I came out. I felt somehow you would be there."

"And what do you want me to do?" said I.

"I have a cousin near London who will look after me until I can find some more work. But I have no money for my fare, and I must have a little to go on with. I want you to lend me twenty pounds." She had evidently thought out precisely what she wanted, said



She was about to speak, when I heard a murmur of voices. "'Shh!" She an illustrated paper. That engaging trio came into the lounge. They

it as though it were the simplest, most natural thing in the world.

"Twenty pounds!" I echoed. I was suddenly acutely conscious of the four five-pound notes in my pocket—the last!

She looked up at me.

"That is not a very important amount to you, is it?"

I managed to refrain from an ironic laugh. That trifling amount happened to be precisely the difference between one remaining chance of life and certain death. If I gave it to her, I might as well shoot myself upon the spot. Apart from those notes, I had

put a finger to her lips, darted to a table a little way off, and picked up were evidently surprised to see her. No one paid any attention to me.

only a few loose centimes in my pocket. I don't know now what I was going to say, but I caught her eyes fixed on me in quietly confident reliance, and I hedged.

"And supposing I said that I cannot lend it to you?"

I saw a tremor pass over her face.

"Then I throw myself into the water," she said, with a finality that was quite devoid of the theatrical. "I will never go back to that hotel." I had no doubt that she meant what she said.

In fiction, the noble hero would have said carelessly: "Here you are, my dear young lady," and handed her over his last ha'penny with a fine indifference to his own fate. I'm afraid I'm not quite so sublimely heroic. What has to be, has to be, but I'm not going to pretend that I ever liked the prospect of looking into the muzzle of that neat little automatic of mine. To me, as I sat there, it was an extremely ugly little dilemma.

She sat quietly awaiting my decision.

It came to me in a sudden little rush, quite apart from my will or my thoughts. I might as well finish with a clean taste in my mouth. That was how it phrased itself. I happened to have a pocket time-table on me. I consulted it, glanced at my watch.

"There's a train just after midnight," I said. "It stops at Monaco. You've got time to catch it here. You change at Marseilles for an express."

I said it in the most casual way I could. Obviously, I could not tell the girl that it was equivalent to my death-warrant. And I saw no sense in making any particular merit of it. She had far better think it was a matter of absolute ease to me.

But at the same time I was secretly a trifle dashed by the simplicity with which she accepted it. It isn't every day a fellow chucks away his last chance of life for a girl he scarcely knows—even if she is, like that girl into whose face I looked for a moment, beautiful as a Madonna, with great sincere eyes that let you into the innocence of her soul as into a church, with that indefinable magnetic emanation of personality that sets every nerve in a man's body tingling and—if he were not under sentence of death—would send him to his knees beside her, begging and praying for her love. I crushed all that back into myself, but, casual as I was, I felt somehow she ought to have guessed. She didn't.

"Thank you," she said, quietly. "I knew I could trust you to help me. Ought we to be going to the station?"

Those commonplace words put the whole thing into the proper perspective. After all, there was nothing so very wonderful in what I was doing—it was mere chance that I happened to be up against it instead of the wealthy young fellow she thought me.

"We ought," I agreed. "Come along. I'll see you into the train."

WE got to the station just five minutes before the train came in. I bought her a ticket right through to London, gave her the balance of the money. She would not arrive penniless, would have enough until she got some sort of job. She looked at me.

"I shall, of course, pay you back," she said. "Directly I earn some money. Where shall I find you?"

I smiled.

"I shall not be leaving Monte Carlo," I replied, with a touch of grim humour. "But that doesn't matter. You need not worry about repaying me."

"Of course, I insist," she said. I shrugged my shoulders. "You have not asked me for my address in London," she added, in a tone that I thought hinted a suspicion of pique at my lack of future interest in her. "But you must have it. I cannot go away owing you this money without you knowing where to ask for it if you need it. Give me a pencil."

I obeyed, and she wrote an address in my notebook.

The train came in. I put her into an empty compartment, climbed up to the door for a last word of good-bye.

We said it. I held her hand, looking into her eyes, and then—just as the guard was blowing his ridiculous little horn—suddenly, without a word, in a mutual impulse of madness, as though moved by something not ourselves, we bent together and our lips met in one long kiss. It went through me like a discharge of electricity. (My God, I've got the feel of it still!) I wrenched myself away, closed the door, dropped off the already moving train. She was gone. . . . The dawn is replacing the moonlight over the sea. In my pocket is one franc twenty centimes—I've just counted it—every cent of money I have in the world. Shall I make an end of it now? What is there to wait for? I've been fingering my good little automatic. No! Seven days I swore to myself I'd have, and seven days I'll have. I'll have one more day to-morrow—it is already to-day—wandering about in the blessed sunshine, seeing her beauty in the blue of the sea, in the loveliness of the almond blossom on the rocks. And then, at the last minute, when the clock strikes midnight—good-bye to everything. In the meantime, I sleep—or at least doze—for an hour or two. I might dream—dream I'm with her in that train now well on its way to Marseilles.

The Last Hour of the Seventh Day.—The first thing I did as I sat down at this table was to take my automatic from the drawer and put it on the table in front of me. It gives me a queer sensation to contemplate it.

What a day! This morning I spent every centime I had on a packet of cheap cigarettes, and went for a walk in the golden sunshine. Never have I known life so vivid. I looked at everything, saying to myself that I saw it for the last time. I was not miserable or morbid. I had come to the end of my tether—and I was glad that the end was among so much beauty. I did not regret my last night's action. On the contrary, it gave me a deep little thrill of satisfaction which pervaded the day. For once in my life I'd done something worth while. I imagined her, now well on her way home.

It was curious with what indifference I passed the Casino.

I lunched with appetite at the hotel. That precious trio were there, with their rabbit-faced prey. They were talking eagerly, evidently disturbed and anxious. I could guess the theme of their conversation. I felt really sorry for little rabbit-face. He looked quite haggard and desperate. In the middle of lunch the manager of the hotel came in and talked to them, bringing what I surmise was a police report For a moment or two I felt uncomfortably apprehensive. But they did not even glance at me. Evidently I had not been identified in connection with her disappearance.

In the afternoon I went round to the Monaco side of the bay and sat on the seat where last night she had said so calmly, "I want you to lend me twenty pounds." Supposing I had not lent it—had gone into the Casino this morning? No, I did *not* regret—I was glad. For such a kiss as I could still feel on my mouth, for such a look as that last look from her eyes, I'd die a dozen times over.

After dinner I went out into the night for one last stroll under the rising moon. I stood contemplating the Casino—that temple of the blind inscrutable goddess where so many before me had staked their last desperate chance of life, and lost. I glanced at my watch. Nine o'clock. Yet three hours——

As I stood there contemplating with a curious detachment that entrance into which the after-dinner crowd was already streaming, my fingers went mechanically to fidget in the pocket of my waistcoat. To my surprise, I felt something there—something round and smooth. I drew it out. It was one of the Casino gambling-counters, value fifty francs. I must have absentmindedly stuck it in that pocket the previous night.

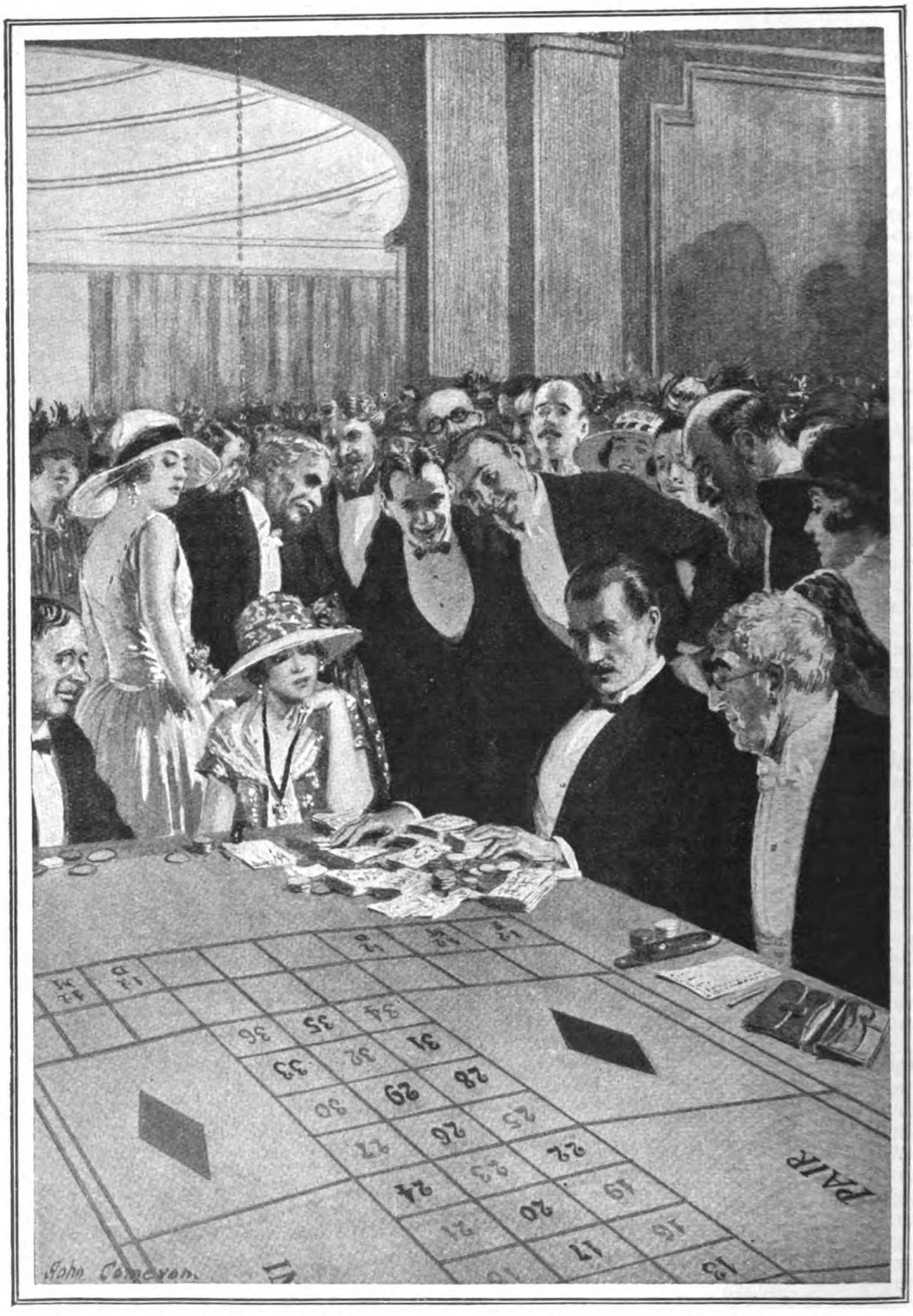
There was obviously only one thing to do with it. The Casino had had all the rest. Manifestly it ought to have this. I would finish completely, to the uttermost last.

IT was with a curious little thrill that I entered the Casino to fling this last symbol of life into the lap of the goddess who had disdained me. So completely had I divorced myself from the place all day that it seemed years since I had been there. The people crowding just as usual round the tables seemed strange, unreal, like ghosts condemned to go on for ever and ever. I was absurdly sorry for them.

For a moment I dallied with the idea of changing my token into five-franc pieces, having ten chances. I rejected it. No. Finish! I went up to the nearest table, flung my counter down at hazard upon a number. The wheel was spinning. Once more I heard the attendant's melancholy voice: "*Rien ne va plus*," and then the result. My interest was so dead that I did not even hear the number he called out. I stood there merely waiting for my counter to be raked in by the croupier. To my surprise, it did not disappear. Instead, he tossed another fifty francs, followed by seventeen counters of a hundred each to join it.

My impulse, of course, was to pick it all up. Then, deliberately, I refrained. I was not going to be played cat-and-mouse with at the last minute by the sardonically capricious goddess I had so long wooed in vain. The final result would be the same as every other night. I had gone through all that, finished with it. This was the end. Had I been allowed I would have left the whole eighteen hundred francs lying on that number. But the bank takes no fantastic chances—limits its liability on any one stake to six thousand francs. I did the nearest thing I could. I left a hundred and fifty francs lying on that number, put four little piles of three hundred francs each upon the lines framing it, and a couple of hundred francs at each extremity of the transverse column which contained it. I had still a fifty-franc counter in my hand. That also I dabbed down on the corner of the same little square. I caught myself smiling grimly, thrilled oddly in this contemptuous defiance of Fortune. I had finished with her. She could take all at the next spin of the wheel.

Once more the roulette spun, the attendant called out his warning and the result. Once more I expected to see my money disappear. There was a momentary pause, and then upon that little square commenced to rain down, not merely hundred-franc counters, but thousand-franc notes—twenty-



I put out my hands over all that money, scarcely heard the envious congratulations of those around me. I had broken the bank!

five of them upon the square itself, two at each extremity of the transverse column. I stood bewildered, staring at it all like one in a trance.

"*À vous, monsieur!*" said the croupier, indicating me with his rake.

I can't explain what came over me. I was like a man paralyzed. I just stood and stared at that heap of wealth that seemed fantastic, unreal, certain to vanish if I touched it. It did not seem my own voice that answered, curtly: "*Je sais bien.*"

And then I went mad—there is no other word for it. *I would have none of it!* Once more I flung back the gift of Fortune in her face, with a wild perversity made the loss certain, staked it all again, as nearly as I could, upon the improbable hazard of that number which had already won twice. Feverishly I distributed it round the nucleus of the hundred and fifty francs left upon the figure itself—four little piles upon the lines, four upon the corners of the square, four upon the extremities of the transverse lines, two upon the transverse columns. The play waited for a moment while the croupier gave me the necessary change for four of my notes. I had still a bundle of them in my hand when these higher-odds stakes were finished. I planked them down as fast as I could, in a trembling frenzy to be rid of them—three of them upon the middle longitudinal column, three of them upon the middle "dozen," six each upon "passe" and "pair," the remainder and five hundred-franc counters upon the "colour." I had very nearly staked the maximum possible—and I stood with nothing in my hand, my senses reeling, my mouth dry, people staring at me all round the table.

The impassive croupier shrugged his shoulders as once more the roulette went spinning. It was no business of his if I cared to behave like a madman. For the same number to come out three times consecutively was one of those miracles that do not happen. I felt it so, too, in a sudden lightning-flash of sanity, in an awful shock at my heart. In a wild impulse of remorse I shot out my arms to rescue it all—and before my finger-tips had touched anything the attendant called: "*Rien ne va plus!*" I was too late.

I stood watching all that spread-out money, tantalizingly mine for such a short instant, with the perspiration breaking out on my brow. I could have screamed. And then——

There was a murmur of astonishment all round the table. People stood up to crane their necks at the little white ball now immobile in the slowly-revolving disc. Once more the attendant shrugged his shoulders. Everyone was looking at me as he commenced to pay out, note after note after note fluttering down upon all that stake which came back to me, section by section, as he disposed of it. There was already a heap in front of me when he stopped.

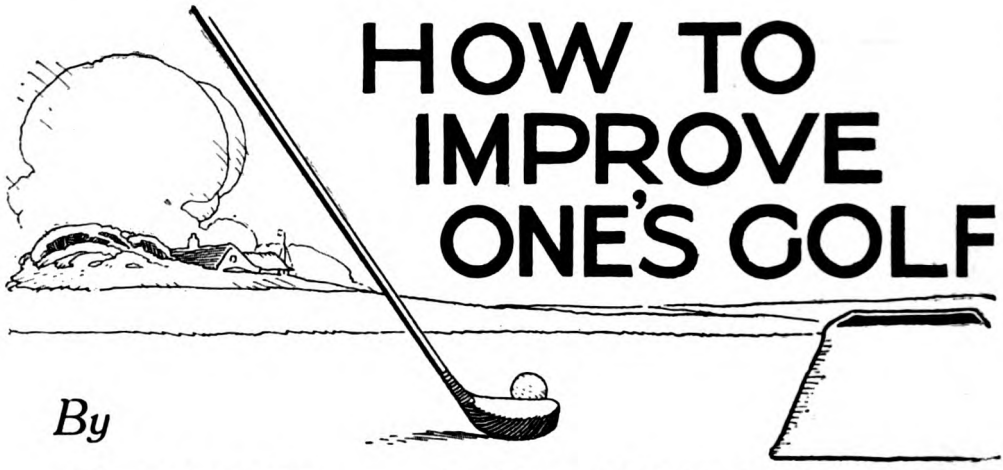
"*Attendez un petit moment, monsieur.*"

Another attendant went quickly off across the room. Play at that table was suspended until he returned. I stood there, dizzy, the lights of the room tracing blurred coruscations in front of my eyes, feeling that I was going to sway and fall. Someone gave me a chair. I sat down in it, put out my hands over all that money, waited. I scarcely heard the envious congratulations of those around me, the murmur all around the table as the players waited for the resumption of the game. *I had broken the bank!*

For a minute or two only that pause lasted. And then the attendant came back swiftly with a new supply of cash. Once more the notes came fluttering down in front of me. I could not even attempt to keep count. When I saw that he had finished, I stuffed those sheaves of money into every pocket that I had, embarrassed to find a place for it all, my hands full at the end. Then, tossing a thousand-franc note to the croupier, I got up—my head on fire—and ran, *ran* out of the Casino.

THE money is all out upon the table in front of me as I write, with my automatic on top of it in a grim little contrast that makes me smile. I imagine to myself that its round black muzzle is bad-temperedly disappointed. I write all this because there's no use going to bed—I couldn't sleep in my excitement; because I want to keep for myself, all the long miraculous years I have yet to live, a record of this moment. I have won over a hundred and thirty-six thousand francs—*one hundred—and thirty—six—thousand——!!* It looks bigger in francs. I've just rung for the hotel people to come and lock it up in their safe.

What shall I do with it? Take it back to the Casino—follow up my luck, win—how much might one win? *No!* Never in my life will I enter a Casino again. It is not a fortune—but it's a fighting-fund with which a man can win fortune—I can feel and see myself galloping a blood-horse round a stock-farm in Rhodesia, in a vast horizon where sugar-icing casinos are difficult even to imagine. I've already booked a sleeper for to-morrow. I've already sent a telegram to that address written in my pocket-book. She'll get it about the time she wakes up to-morrow morning. Will she say: "Yes"? I still feel that kiss upon my mouth——



HOW TO IMPROVE ONE'S GOLF

By

CYRIL J. H. TOLLEY

Illustrated by H. F. Crowther Smith and W. F. Thomas.

NOBODY can excel at golf or any game unless he gives his mind to it. He must be prepared to give up many hours and leisure moments to the study of the game. He must try to work out his own salvation; he must experiment and try various methods of playing shots, various grips and stances, until he is more or less convinced that he has found out the one that suits him best. It will be tedious, it may drive him to despair, and then, when things look their blackest and he is on the point of abandoning hope, the impossible will happen, the silver lining will appear, and he will fondly imagine he has broken the back of the game—in other words, discovered its great secret—for he has hit his last three drives far and sure down the course!

LACK OF CONFIDENCE.

Players of every grade all suffer more or less acutely, at various and sometimes frequent periods in their golfing careers, from that most destructive disease, lack of confidence. It generally starts in a small way—you may go off your putting. You are all right at the long ones; in fact, you may consistently hit the hole at the side and then leave yourself a putt of thirty inches or so. Usually you find no difficulty in tapping in one of this length, but today you miss two, three, or even four of this distance. An appalling panic in all probability may now set in unless you are very careful. At first you console yourself by thinking that, although you hit the ball truly, the reason why it failed to drop was that the edge of the hole was knocked up and your ball could not possibly have gone in. Your next internal excuse is that the green is untrue and the ball turned; the next time you miss you begin to have distinct doubts in your own mind whether you are striking the ball properly, and at the end of the round your confidence is decidedly shaken.

You confide your troubles to the club secretary and the local pro.

This is most disturbing, and you dash up to your opponent and ask him whether he detected anything in the course of the game indicating why you were not striking the ball correctly. He was in all probability so engrossed in his own game and the prospect of taking your half-crown—he may even have secretly rejoiced at your repeated failure on the greens—that he has not noticed how you took back your putter or how you followed through.

This is the individual you must guard yourself against. Rather than appear discourteous by showing such a total disregard for your game, he will at once offer you some trivial and generally very harmful advice as to why you have had difficulty on the green. He will in all probability say that you are cutting across the ball or stabbing the putt. If he is a theorist, or a first-class player, he will say that you are using your wrists too much, and that on the days when you were holing out so convincingly you used to keep your wrists fairly stiff and putt with your arms.

I will attempt to return the sunny smile to your doleful face, and make you once again a pleasurable and cheery player.

I will not deal with this type of opponent, but with the golfer who you feel is really your inferior, although it is surprising what luck he always has when he plays with you, for he nearly always manages to fluke a victory. Now, presuming you are a keen exponent of the game and are anxious, apart from monetary reasons, to get back your putting at the very first opportunity, you rush to some out-of-the-way green and there try to eradicate this appalling cutting or stabbing. While you are there combating with the short putt fiend, who should appear but the club secretary and the local pro., to whom you confide your troubles, and they, after watching you perform, advance new theories. You cannot expect to putt, they say, if you will take the club back such a long way, and you must endeavour not to raise the putter head so high in the air when you do take it back. By now you are really in a state of utter and complete exhaustion, mental and physical, and you return home in a harassed frame of mind, but with the consolation that, although you cannot hole out, you still have the rest of the game on a firm basis.

The next day appears and, apart from an occasional lapse on the greens, you expect to play well. Then it occurs to you that when playing your approaches you must endeavour to leave the ball so close to the hole that you cannot possibly take three putts—therefore you must concentrate on your approaching. All goes well for several holes and you are playing quite nicely, when you are overwhelmed with disaster.

In attempting to stop the ball on the hard sixth green, you are compelled to own that the ball was struck more on the shank than on the face of your mashie. Perhaps you looked up, more probably your caddie was fidgeting. For the next few holes all goes well, it was your caddie who moved, and—another shank! Of course you know the cause, but still it is a little disconcerting. Perhaps your opponent can put you right. Yes, too much right hand. You thought so, you always had that tendency. But swayed your body? Surely not. In your next attempt to play a mashie shot, in endeavouring to play with the left hand and keep your body still, you forget the first thing you ever learnt, and that was to look at the ball. Now your day *is* ruined, all your confidence is gone, you hate the hot weather, you loathe your opponent. Oh, how you wish you had gone to the office! and you numbly wonder if ever again you will play well.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WATCHING GOOD PLAYERS.

I will attempt to restore that ebbing confidence, return the sunny smile to your doleful face, and make you once again a pleasurable and cheery player. If you are a young golfer—young in point of years, that is—it will not be so hard to start you on the right road. Your limbs and muscles will be free and supple, and it should not be difficult to mould your style on some leading player's swing. I attach the very greatest importance to being able to pick up and copy various strokes as played by good players. Whenever you hear that a player of repute is coming to play in your district, if you are keen to get better at the game, make it your business to watch him play. Do not be discouraged by the enormous distances he hits the ball; rather let it be a source of encouragement to you, for if he can do it there is no earthly reason why you should not in future days emulate his success, or even better it. It is no good watching a successful player whose style is far from orthodox—apart from having an interest in counting how many strokes he plays in getting round the course. Never try to imitate his style; it will not lead you far, even if you can copy it. But if the player has a sound style, it is your job to watch him as carefully as possible.

Get as near to him as the stewards will allow and watch closely every movement he makes. First, notice his stance in relation to the ball. You will probably find that the ball is practically opposite his left heel. Then notice the position of his feet. The left foot is certainly turned in more than the right at the start of the stroke. Now watch their respective positions after the stroke. Try to notice where his balance is before, during, and after the shot and see if he has bent his knees at all. Then pay especial attention to his grip. See if you can tell if he is gripping tightly all through the swing and whether he slackens his grip at the top of the backward swing. Then observe his swing, see how he takes back the club and for how far, get some idea of the pace of the swing. Then observe his method of hitting the ball, notice how he accelerates the club-head on its downward path, his follow through, the straightness of the left arm in the back swing and the straightness of the right arm in the follow through. His pivoting movement is also of great importance and is most interesting.

When you have seen him drive, then watch him play an iron shot. Notice that while with a wooden club he swept through the ball, with an iron club he hits it a downward blow and a slice of turf is removed on the far side of the ball. His swing with an iron will be remarkably shorter, more snappy, and resembling more nearly a hit than a swing. See if he turns the face of his iron out or in and watch the flight of the ball, trying to discover what was in the mind of the player. It is very fascinating to try to visualize the player's stroke before he makes it; he may have three or four ways of playing the shot, and it is most interesting to see if, by playing the shot the way he did, he made it harder or simpler for himself. Then watch him approach, pitch over, and play out of bunkers, and finally putt.

Provided you have a receptive brain, you will find that it is not difficult to reproduce some of the strokes that the player made. You will not, at first, have the pleasure of never missing a shot, but you will find by practising that you have considerably improved your game and, what is more, in spite of your plus-fours, you will look like a golfer. Older people may not find it so easy to copy another's style, but a great deal of most useful information can be gleaned by watching. You may not be able to produce a facsimile swing, but you can apply the chief principles to your swing, and you will be surprised how it improves the standard of your game.

PRACTISE! PRACTISE! PRACTISE!

Golfers in this country do not spend enough time practising. Only a few really first-class players ever get beyond thinking of taking out a pocketful of balls after a round to try to master some particular stroke that baffled them during their game. Those who do, however, more than reap the benefit of their labours. The majority will in all probability spend quite a

Get as near to him as the stewards will allow and watch closely every movement he makes. When you have seen him drive—

—then watch him play an iron shot—

considerable time practising their putting when they feel they are not striking the ball correctly, but few there are who go out solemnly with brassies and irons to correct some slight fault, which, if taken in hand at once, could soon be eradicated, yet if neglected may take days or even weeks to stamp out. Maybe it is the tedium of recovering balls in various parts of the course which rather damps their not very considerable keenness, and yet if they would take out a caddie with them this hardship disappears.

In America it is amazing the time players spend, even immediately before a competition, in strenuously hitting balls with all clubs from niblicks to drivers. It is a very common occurrence to see a player dispatch as many as twenty balls with his driver towards some distant caddie; the moment they are retrieved they are again whacked off with an iron, and by the time the practice is finished the caddie has made as many as five or six journeys to the tee with the recovered balls. The American golfer—and the same also applies to the American race—will leave nothing to chance; when he is not playing or practising, he is thinking out various means of perfecting his game. Theirs is the right way to succeed, which they invariably do, whereas over here we do not give the game our whole attention and—well, I suppose the British like to play at games for exercise and amusement. We like to play at golf, for golf is really a game, and anything in the nature of making a business of a game is nauseating to us and so we do not always win. In spite of their continuous practice, moreover, the Americans appear to enjoy the game every bit as much as we do, yet I cannot help thinking that they take their bad play—which is not such an everyday occurrence as ours—in a very much harder way than we do. I don't mean to imply that they lose badly—for they are splendid sportsmen, to a man—yet there is a tendency to look a little more depressed and take their ill play more to heart. But I ramble rather off my subject.

LEARNING BY EXPERIMENT.

If you can make yourself practise it will be a great feather

—and putt.

in your cap and will do you an immense amount of good. At the same time, do not forget to experiment. Try playing all sorts of shots in ways that are down in black and white and also those that come out of your own brain. It is very probable that you may discover, not only for yourself but for golfers in general—but I do not offer you much encouragement in this direction—a certain method of playing a shot which will enable you to stop the ball quicker than was believed possible, or even give you an unheard-of carry. Whatever you do you must work it out for yourself, and, having done so, it will give you increased confidence, and that, after all, is what you are attempting to obtain.

Take a performer of trick shots like Kirkwood—what would happen if he were suddenly to lose his confidence as he drove a ball off a friend's watch-face or even off the friend's foot, as he is wont to do before admiring audiences ? Disaster would ensue, either for the watch or foot—both borrowed, it is true, but none the less hurtful to their respective owners. It has been written in one paper that Kirkwood lost this year's Open Championship at Troon when he got into the bunker at the fourteenth hole. He tried to recover by the aid of a trick shot, which failed. It so unnerved him and destroyed his confidence that he was never afterwards in the hunt.

Doing holes in one stroke is also a matter of confidence. I believe that if you can convince yourself that holing tee shots is not a matter of luck, but purely skill, you may—I don't say you will—store up enough confidence to repeat the performance fairly regularly. Sandy Herd, the " One " King, has done no less than seventeen ones. This, I would claim, is an example of, shall I say, super-confidence. Though to do a hole in one may be the ambition of all golfers, it is likely to grow into an expensive luxury if over indulged in, as the old gentleman, who promised his caddie a sovereign every time he performed the feat, found when he did it on an average once a week—and that always at the same hole, a blind hole !

You may have been wondering when I am coming to the point of this article—how you are to improve. It is possible that all your game is at fault, so I will take each club in turn and try to give you back your form. There are so many things that you may be liable to do wrong with a driver that some will have to be left over for next month. You may find that you are unable to hit the ball at all, you may be topping, hitting the ground either in front or behind the ball, slicing, cutting, hooking, or even getting no length. You can also hit the ball too much off the heel, or even toe, and therefore I will take each in order and give you at least one cure which I adopt for each.

THE CURE FOR MISSING THE BALL.

This is an incident which generally occurs on a crowded first tee when the local champion is anxious to start and is not averse to making audible remarks on letting duffers—or shall I say elementary players ?—start before eleven o'clock. It is a ghastly feeling to miss the ball completely—not that I can remember doing so for many years, although my initial tee shot, after a lapse of nearly three years due to the war, was as near an approach to an air shot as it is possible to get. But that is by the way. You, my elementary player, have been instructed in the rudiments of the game, so you know your stance, your grip, and what you are attempting to do. That is a point I will concede.

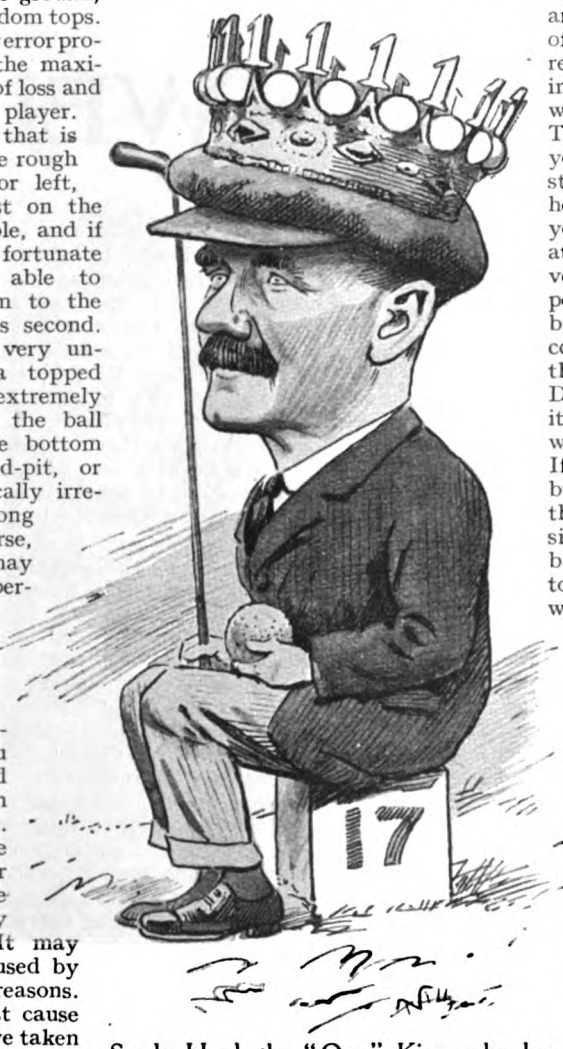
Now ignore the rows of grinning faces and imagine you are merely driving into the net in your garden with only your admiring family fondly gazing at you. The next point is to pick out some unsuspecting recess at the back of the ball and glue your eyes to it. That is the place where you are to make contact. Waggle the club slowly. The waggle is very important, for without it how can you work yourself into that frenzy which is necessary to impart to the ball that awful feeling of hate ? You must waggle the club slowly, for your waggle must be at the same pace as your back swing, which must be slow, not only at first, but all the way back to the horizontal, or as near to it as your normal swing takes you. Still gazing at the recess at the back of the ball, start the downward swing slowly, then quicken its speed until at the moment of impact and immediately afterwards the club-head is travelling at its fastest. Having dislodged the ball, gaze for the veriest second at the sand on which the ball rested, force through the club-head, keeping the right arm straight until the horizontal is reached, when the weight of the club-head will do the rest. If all has gone well, you will no longer see rows of grinning faces, but, instead, besides a look of incredulity on each and every countenance, a most gratifying and gradually-swelling audible admiration will sweetly and gently buzz in your burning ears. Of course, you will not have time on the tee to tell them all how you accomplished it, but when you return to the club-house at the end of a perfect round, do not be loath to let them know all you have discovered. They will think you are a genius—and it is nice to feel, but very difficult to look, a perfect genius.

HOW TO CURE TOPPING.

Topping, quite the most prevalent and persistent malady that occurs in a golfer's career, is not the hardest to correct, but unfortunately it has a nasty habit of cropping up, however good the player. The one person who does seem exempt is the professional. He may slice or hook, or even hit the ground, but he very seldom tops. This particular error probably causes the maximum amount of loss and penalty to the player. With a drive that is hit, be it in the rough to the right or left, one is at least on the way to the hole, and if the player is fortunate he may be able to "yank" it on to the green with his second. But this is very unlikely with a topped shot. It is extremely probable that the ball is lying at the bottom of some sand-pit, or buried practically irretrievably in long grass. Of course, your top may have been perpetrated at some hole that has no trouble in front of the tee, and consequently you have reaped the minimum of punishment.

However, be it one way or the other, the fault is very annoying. It may have been caused by a variety of reasons. The commonest cause is that you have taken your eye off the ball too quickly. You may also have swayed your body, transferred your weight from one leg to the other too soon, committed the fault popularly described as "pressing"—in which you have committed all known and many unknown sins—and finally you may have made the ball appear to be topped by smothering the stroke. It is possible that a top may be caused by the player being on his toes at the moment of striking, but the latter fault properly comes under the term "pressing" and will be dealt with separately.

The first part of the cure is the same as for missing the ball, as topping is only one degree better than missing. You are not focusing the ball correctly, and the recess at the back of the ball must be watched relentlessly, and also, after impact, the ground on which the ball reposed. This will teach you to keep your head down as well as still. If you keep your head still you cannot sway your body very much—if at all. There are a few very good players who appear to sway their body, but they focus the ball so correctly that it negatives the result of the sway. Do not cultivate a sway—it is not attractive, and will lead you to disaster. If you pivot correctly—briefly, to do so you turn the left and right hand sides of your body on your backbone, in a similar way to a revolving door—you will find it is practically impossible to sway, and if you remember to hit against your left hip, then you cannot sway at all. But if you let your left leg get slack and allow your knee to bend the stroke will be a failure. Shifting your weight too quickly from the right to the left leg will produce a sway, and you will find that getting your weight on the left foot as you start the downward swing prevents you following through unless you let the left hip sag. If you remember, however, to keep the head of the club low after impact, and restrict the follow through, the ball will fly very low. It was a stroke that had to be learnt in the gutty ball days when playing into the wind, but is of little use with the modern ball, which will fly well even if hit high into the wind.



Sandy Herd, the "One" King, who has holed out in one seventeen times.

(The second portion of Mr. Tolley's article, which will be found full of helpful advice, will appear next month.)

THE FIRST MAN

by

W. B. MAXWELL

ILLUSTRATED BY J. DEWAR MILLS

I.

IT was about eight o'clock on a cold autumn evening, and old Mr. Arnold, coming into the comfortable front sitting-room of his little house, wished that it had not been necessary to go out to-night, and shrank more than ever from the task that lay before him.

Miss Clara Paton, who had been softly playing the harmonium that stood on the far side of the cheerful hearth, abandoned the music-stool and rearranged the collar of his overcoat, which was not properly turned down at the back.

"But where's auntie? Isn't she ready?"

Old Mrs. Arnold answered the question by coming into the room dressed in her black mantle and hat. Like her husband she was thin and grey; ordinarily all smiles and good-humour, she had a solemn air to-night. In fact, the old couple wore their Sunday aspect—say a Sunday in Lent—as when standing side by side in their pew at St. Luke's Church, after he had taken round the offertory bag and she was listening to the last verse of the long hymn.

"Got your gloves, aunt?"

"Yes, Clara."

They were retired shopkeepers, much liked and highly respected in this Thames-side town, where they had kept their old-fashioned linen-draper's shop for thirty years before selling it advantageously to a formidable modern competitor. During those thirty industrious years they had earned a reputation for goodness, kindness, transparent honesty, and they still retained it.

"Then you'd better be off," said Miss Clara. "Mrs. Dibden expects you directly after eight."

CLARA PATON, the niece, shared in the respect enjoyed by the old people, and was also admired for her own attributes—so much so as to make it appear strange that she should have been allowed to reach the age of twenty-eight "without being snapped up," as the saying is. But friends and neighbours had heard recently with satisfaction that she was to marry Henry Dibden, the son of the boat-builder. No alliance could be more suitable or proper; for Henry had become a partner in his father's business, and would therefore be able to maintain a wife adequately without considering any expectations as to a possible inheritance in the future.

Now Mr. and Mrs. Arnold were going by appointment to call upon Mr. and Mrs. Dibden.

"One last word," said Mr. Arnold; and he closed the sitting-room door lest Agnes, their maid-servant, should pass through the hall and overhear. "You have quite made up your mind that this is really necessary?"

"Quite," said Clara; "or I wouldn't have asked you to do it."

"Very good," said Mr. Arnold. "I recognize your right to decide. But——"

He paused, and with downcast eyes stood looking at the carpet; while Mrs. Arnold pulled on her black gloves in an agitated manner and looked at Clara.

Clara had gone to the fireplace, and for a moment or two she remained with her back to them; then she turned. She was a tall young woman, pale and dark-haired, with a pleasant voice and a gentle manner; but in this last respect she seemed not like herself to-night. She made an almost tragic gesture, and the tone of her voice was vibrant and intense.

"*Please*, uncle. It has got to be."

"So be it, then. But this I must say——" and again he paused. "Clarrie, dear, I have searched my own conscience—and I cannot think it is our bounden duty."

"I agree with your uncle," said Mrs. Arnold.

Copyright, U.S.A., by W. B. Maxwell, 1923.

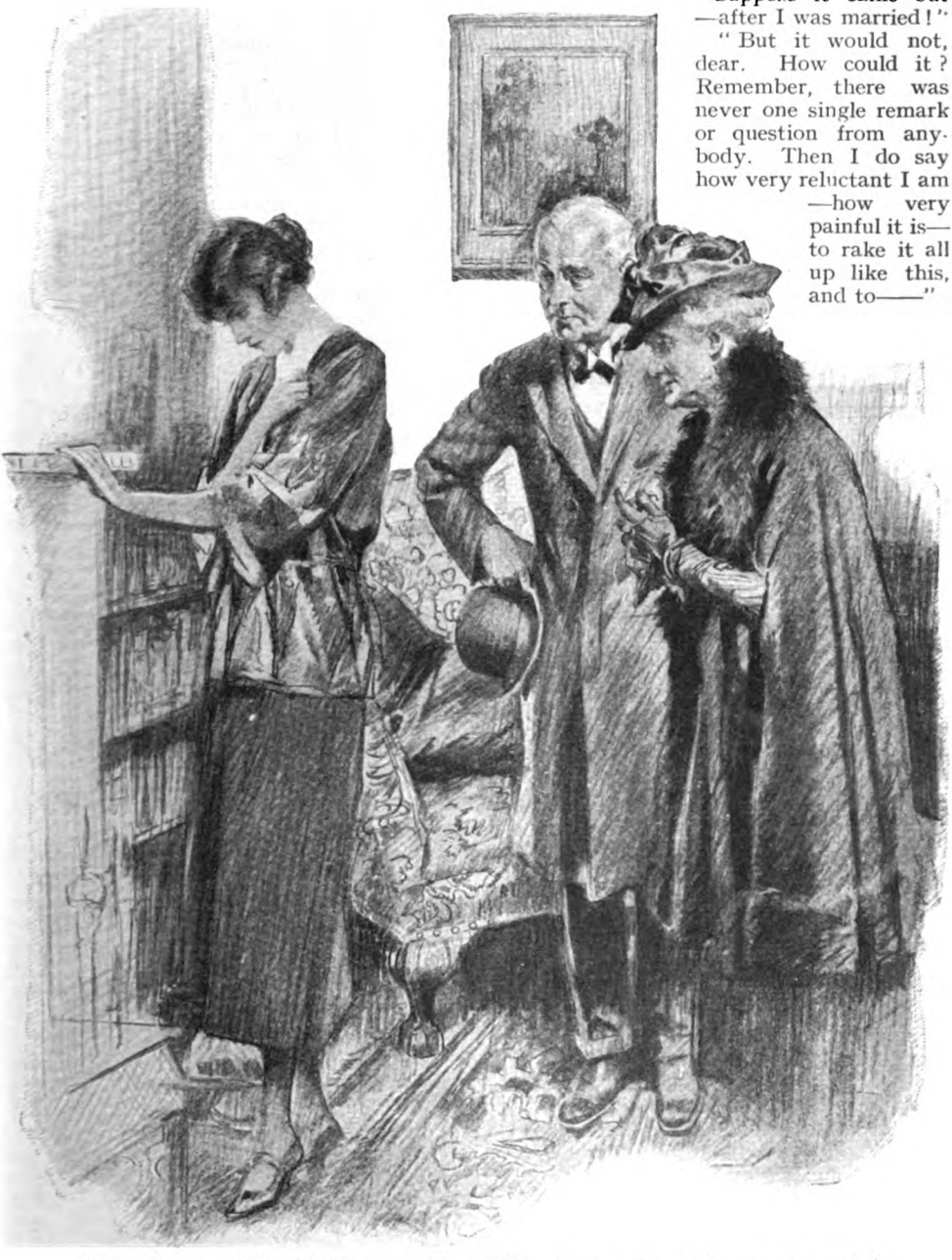
"Oh, no, auntie."

"Yes, and he's not one to trifle with his conscience—nor I either. That's never been our way."

"So far as religion goes," said Mr. Arnold, continuing quietly, "well, the best teachers say we're wrong to torment ourselves with the past. We cannot change it, and we should therefore leave it alone. We are to look forward, not backwards."

"I *am* looking forward," said Clara; and she pushed her hair away from her forehead and eyebrows. "Suppose it came out—after I was married!"

"But it would not, dear. How could it? Remember, there was never one single remark or question from anybody. Then I do say how very reluctant I am—how very painful it is—to rake it all up like this, and to——"



"One last word," said Mr. Arnold. "You have quite made up your mind that this is really necessary?"

"Uncle," said Clara, sombrely, "it's no use talking. What you're saying is what I thought myself in the beginning—before I grew to be so fond of him. But now I *know* that they must be told—that *he* must be told. And if you don't do it, I must tell him myself."

"You risk losing him," said Mrs. Arnold. "Don't forget that."

"I can't help it."

"Ah! I wonder," said Mrs. Arnold, looking at the girl intently. "I wonder."

"What are you wondering about?"

"Why, whether you're really as fond of him as you think—whether, if you really loved him as much as he does you, you'd be so willing to face the risk."

"Auntie, that's not kind of you. Of course I love him—very dearly. Who could help loving him? So good—such a splendid fellow!"

"Say no more to her," said Mr. Arnold. "It was for her to decide, and she has decided. Very well, Clarrie, dear."

They both kissed her then, and set forth on their errand. She went with them through the narrow hall and out to the front steps, where she spoke cheerfully, in her natural style, giving each of them an affectionate pat as they descended the steps.

"Uncle, just a moment. I'm sure it will be all right. But of course I shall be most wretchedly anxious. You'll come back as soon as you can, won't you?"

From the darkness of the tiny front garden Mr. Arnold spoke in a quiet matter-of-fact tone. "It will take a little time, Clara; and they may ask us to stay to supper. If they do, we sha'n't well be able to refuse—in the circumstances."

She saw them crossing the road in the light from a lamp-post, then walking side by side on the opposite pavement, and then they faded from sight. But she still stood out there in the cold and dark, following them with her thoughts.

At last, with a shiver, she came back into the warmth and light of the house.

Agnes the maid was in the hall pointing excitedly to the hat-rack and the umbrella-stand.

"Oh, miss, you've let them go without their umbrellas. Look, there's the master's—and Mrs. Arnold's too."

"It doesn't matter. I don't suppose it's going to rain."

"I'm not so sure, miss. Mr. Arnold he said at tea the glass had fallen."

Perhaps nothing could have more strongly indicated the trouble of the old people's minds than this forgetting of the umbrellas.

Clara, shivering again, went into the front room, made up the fire, and sat beside it, holding her chilled hands to the genial glow. It was a pleasant room, homely yet not altogether commonplace; with books on low shelves, some old prints on the walls, Clara's cottage piano at one side of the hearth and the small harmonium at the other side—a room, it seemed, in which people ought to be happy as well as comfortable. Only a few evenings ago she and her future husband had sung duets together, while the uncle and aunt beamed at them and listened very happily to the melodious accord of the two voices. But to-night the room lost that aspect of sheltering friendliness as Clara sat in it all alone except for her anxious brooding thoughts.

A long time passed, and then she was roused from meditation by the sharp patter of rain against the window-panes. She went out into the hall and called to the maid.

"Agnes, you were right. It *is* raining. What can we do?"

Agnes immediately offered to put on her waterproof and run round to Mr. Dibden's with the umbrellas.

"Sure you don't mind, Agnes? It's not so bad now. Perhaps you can get there and back between the showers."

"That's all right, miss," said Agnes, valiantly. "Don't you worry about *me*."

"You're a dear, Agnes. . . . Will you ask if they've any message for me?"

"Yes, miss."

AND soon the girl was away on her short journey. Clara went out to the front steps again, and listened to the light scuttle of her footsteps after she had disappeared. The rain seemed about to stop; there came a rustle of dead leaves blown along the pavement. Then it began to rain heavily. A woman with her skirt over her head ran fast for cover, and a policeman passing slowly in the lamp-light showed his tarpaulin cape already wet and glistening.

It was extraordinarily quiet at night in these respectable little roads that lay between the river and the railway; the houses, all similar in character with their porches, steps, and small front gardens, kept blinds down and windows curtained; but beyond the black roofs one could see the dark sky faintly illumined by the lights of the town itself, where life and activity clustered round the railway station, the big taverns, and the market-place. One could hear, too, from over there, the clatter of the electric trains hurrying to London, and now and then the roar and whistle of a big steam-driven express sweeping away towards the distant countryside. But except for these remote noises the silence was profound, seeming to stifle even the beat of the rain.

Then Clara heard another footstep. It

came nearer and nearer, and suddenly ceased. A tall, thin man looking like a tramp had appeared in that patch of lamplight, and crossing the road he stood just below her, inside their garden gate.

II.

THE old people had been welcomed very cordially by Mr. and Mrs. Dibden.

"Sit down. Sit here," said Mr. Dibden. "Henry, put the lamp on the table."

"Won't you take off your hat, Mrs. Arnold?" said Mrs. Dibden. "You'll stay to supper, of course."

"If you wish it," said Mr. Arnold, "after our conversation is finished, we won't say no."

The Dibdens' room was very simple, devoid of those evidences of educated taste that were perceptible at the house of the Arnolds—no musical instruments, no books, no prints. On a sideboard there were models of a Thames skiff and a sailing punt. A round table occupied the middle of the room. Henry Dibden put a large oil lamp on the table, and stood smiling while the elders seated themselves about the table with the unshaded light full upon their faces.

"But look here," said Dibden, with a jovial laugh, "talking is dry work. Mother, the glasses! Henry, get the whisky."

"No, if you please," said Mr. Arnold. "I prefer not. What I have to communicate——" and he stopped, looking at the polished surface of the table.

"Yes?" said Dibden, in the same jovial tone. He was a short, stout, bearded man, younger than Mr. Arnold. "What's it all about?"

"It's about Clara."

"Yes, so you said—something you wish to discuss between us, without her present."

"Exactly. To begin with," and Mr. Arnold looked up and met their eyes again, "I want you to remember that Clara, in sober truth, is just the apple of our eyes."

"Quite so," said Dibden, with unabated joviality. "But she's too nice for you to keep her to yourselves. If not our Harry, it would be somebody else. Besides, he isn't going to take her away from the place."

"She is very dear to us," old Arnold repeated.

"I know she's far above me in all ways," said Henry, with an enthusiastic outburst. "Mr. Arnold, I know that only too well. But I mean to be worthy of her"; and there was deep emotion in his strong voice. "You may trust her to me, sir."

"There, you sit down and listen," said his mother, laughing good-humouredly. "No need for him to cry such small potatoes, is there, Mrs. Arnold? He's been a good son, and I dare say he'll make a good enough husband."

HENRY obediently seated himself, with his chair drawn back a little way behind Mrs. Dibden's elbow. He and his mother resembled each other: they were big, fair, strong people, with broad kindly faces and lightish blue eyes; and merely by seeing them now side by side one might have understood that he not only loved but reverenced her, and at all times submitted to her authority. In fact, Mrs. Dibden was the ruling spirit, well accustomed to guide and control her two men—the stout, brown-eyed husband and the blue-eyed giant of a son.

Mr. Arnold went on quietly: "As you know, she is not really our niece—our cousin."

"Yes, so we've always understood."

"Her family—she belongs to my wife's family—were good people. When I say good, I'm not so much thinking of religious, but their general way of living. They were all of them upright, self-respecting—never do a mean or shabby thing, not one of them—and mostly thinking of others rather than themselves."

"You may believe it," said old Mrs. Arnold, nodding her head; "for it's true."

"And we consider," Mr. Arnold continued, "that these qualities have come out in Clara."

"No doubt of it," said Mr. Dibden, very heartily. "But we don't require a testimonial of her."

"Hush!" said Mrs. Dibden. "Don't interrupt. Listen." She said this in a tone different from that which she had employed hitherto; and she moved the lamp nearer to the edge of the table, so that she might have a full, unimpeded view of old Arnold's face. She had detected what as yet her two men did not remotely guess, that this thing was serious, perhaps most desperately serious. "Go on, please."

"Then you understand there was no concealment—no deception—in our calling her niece. We did it because of her youth—and we meant to adopt her. She has lived with us all the time since she was fifteen."

"Yes."

"All the time—except for a short period." Mr. Arnold stopped once more, and examined the shining table that reflected the lamp as if in dark water. Then, looking up, he met the mother's eyes steadily. "A period of some months, rather more than half a year, when, to our great sorrow, she allowed herself to be lured away by a man."

"Well, this is news," said Mrs. Dibden, quietly. "Yes, this is news with a vengeance. D'you mean she was living with

the man as man and wife, but without being married?"

"That is so. We rescued her from his clutches—and fetched her straight home. It was over seven years ago—getting on for eight years."

"No," said Mrs. Arnold, correcting him. "It won't be eight years till next April."

"Henry, my boy," said Dibden, "do you follow what Mr. Arnold's telling us? It strikes me as a bit off. How do you take it?"

Henry pushed his chair back noisily and sprang to his feet. His face was crimson in the lamp glow. "It's not true!"

he shouted. 'It's a lie! I don't believe a word of it. Oh, I can't—I can't!" and he put both his hands to his head, as if to drive the blood downward.

His mother had risen too, and she surrounded his body with her arms. "You sit down and be quiet," she said, gently. "What's the use of talking silly like a child? Naturally it's true if Mr. Arnold says so. Surely to goodness he wouldn't invent it. It's nothing to boast about."

"Certainly not," said Mr. Arnold. "We felt the disgrace of it very acutely. But what I wish to place before you is that she was very young—and it was simply a sort of accident, which she was among the first to regret—the very first, in fact. It was over and done with all these years ago. And I will say frankly, Mrs. Dibden, for my part I would have kept it back."

"Oh, you couldn't have kept it back, Mr. Arnold. It would have been wicked to keep it back."

"Well, that's Clara's view. She insisted on our stating the facts."

"Yes, but she's let it go too long"; and Mrs. Dibden glanced round at her son, who was sitting now with his face buried in his hands. "The mischief has been done."

"The way I've always looked at it is this," said Mr. Arnold, making a deprecatory gesture. "If it had been a secret marriage that for good reasons we wanted kept quiet, and she was a widow—well, wouldn't we be entitled?"

"But she wasn't married to him," said the mother.

"No—I've said so."

"And the man isn't dead?"

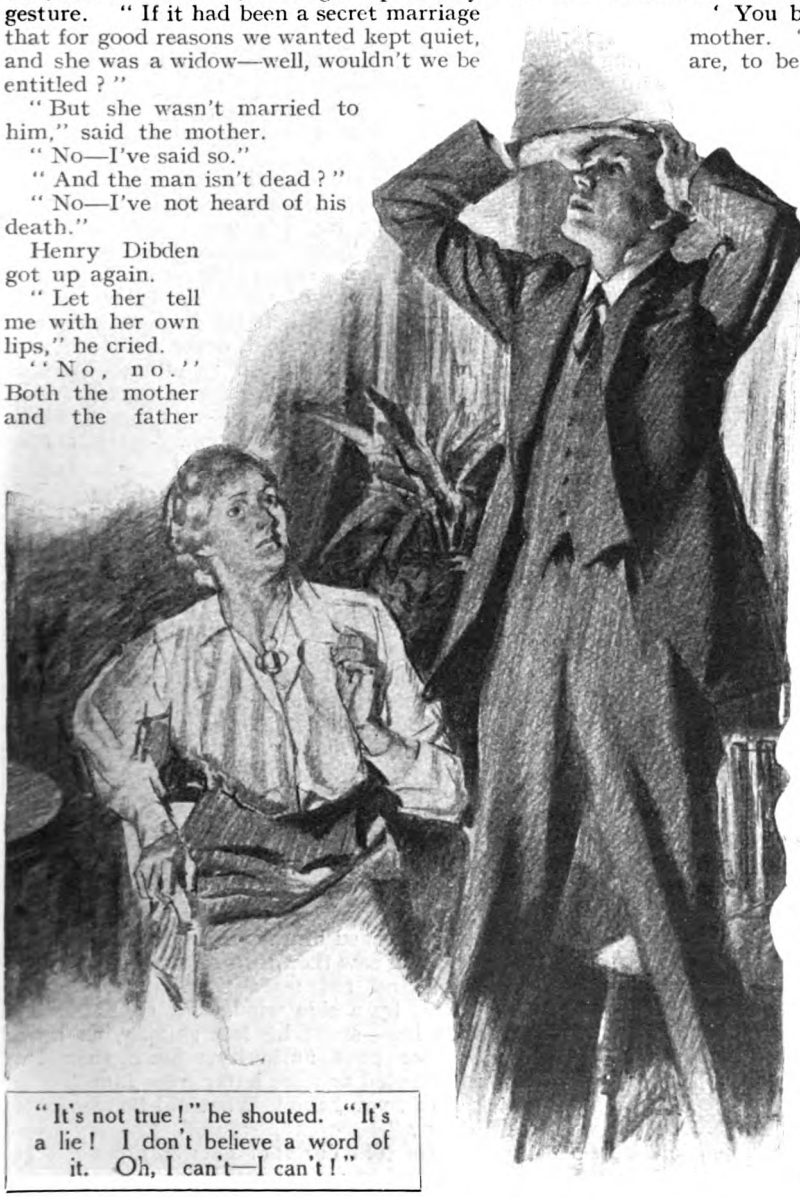
"No—I've not heard of his death."

Henry Dibden got up again.

"Let her tell me with her own lips," he cried.

"No, no." Both the mother and the father restrained him; begging, commanding that he should stay here with them quietly and not act in a foolish manner. He went then to the window of the room, jerked up the blind, and opened the window; and sat there looking out at the rain and the darkness, and gasping as if he wanted air to enable him to breathe.

"There's more in all this than meets the eye," said his father, loudly and argumentatively. "Let's hear the whole story."



"It's not true!" he shouted. "It's a lie! I don't believe a word of it. Oh, I can't—I can't!"

"No, I can't bear it," groaned Henry at the window.

"You be quiet," said his mother. "Great baby you are, to be sure. Now, Mr. Arnold, I certainly sha'n't pretend that what you've let fall isn't going to make any difference. No. It's a thing one can't answer right off-hand. We must consider."

IT was almost an unimaginable scene. They were all so simple and direct, saying strange, unexpected things because they had no language wherewith to clothe their thoughts gracefully, and yet they were not quite undignified in the grief and pain that they felt; indeed, they showed an uncouth sympathy one with another that was noble because so entirely sincere. They were agitated, but struggling hard to be calm.

"We see it's very unpleasant to you," said Dibden, "and we give you the credit for opening our eyes."

"Yes," said Mrs. Dibden; "but, as I tell him, it's precious late in the day. . . . Might one ask the name of the man?"

"He was a Mr. Eustace Fenn."

"*Mister!* You're very ceremonious, calling him like that."

"He was a gentleman."

"Gentleman! Funny sort o' gentleman. He didn't act like one."

"No—far from it. But I mean he

belonged to that walk of life, lived in a rich style." And Mr. Arnold told them how this scoundrel Fenn had stayed during the fatal summer at the best hotel in the place, "making quite a splash"; getting to know many people, and taking them up and down the river in an electric launch that he had hired or bought; giving expensive picnic-parties, and so on. "You must have seen him yourself—at the time."

"Don't remember him," said Dibden. "Do you call him to mind, Henry?"

Henry at the window only groaned.

"Leave him alone," said his mother. "Go on, Mr. Arnold."

Going on, Mr. Arnold told them the remainder of the distressing incident. The man had made love to their unfortunate girl, and before the summer ended he abducted her from her home.

"And what's he been doing all these years?" asked Mrs. Dibden. "That's what I'd like to know next. What about him?"

BUT there was an interruption. Henry burst into a noisy fit of sobbing. It was dreadful to see—the sudden abandonment of this great strong man to what seemed the overwhelming sorrow of a little child. He wept as a child weeps for its broken toy, its lost illusions, or in its first agonizing experience of undeserved punishment. Both his parents went to him—solicitous, heart-wrung, trying to make him feel their love and compassion, though speaking in their ordinary way. "There, there," said the mother, with her arm about his bowed neck, "don't make a laughing-stock of yourself."

"Damn it, Henry, pull yourself together," urged the father.

And while they stood with him Mr. Arnold said desolately to Mrs. Arnold, "It is very painful. I knew it would be painful, but it is worse than I expected."

The commotion by the window ceasing, Mrs. Dibden returned to the table.

"I was asking you, Mr. Arnold, has he ever tried to get her into his power again?"

Mr. Arnold hesitated as to how he should reply.

"It's important that we should get to the very bottom of it," said Mrs. Dibden; "and more in this respect than anything else."

"He wrote to her—but she did not have the letter."

"Ah! But was he trying to get hold of her? Mrs. Arnold—you're a woman—you know what I'm after perhaps better than your husband. You know that when a girl has gone like that—when it's the first man she's ever had to do with—well, that man has shown his power over her—and he has the power over her always, if he cares to use his power."

"Certainly not in this case."

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Arnold, in every case. Anyone will tell you so—the doctors, the clergymen—anyone that *knows*."

Mrs. Arnold spoke sadly and philosophically.

"You shall have the truth, and the whole truth, Mrs. Dibden—though Mr. Arnold won't face it. The power that man had over poor little Clara was his money—and nothing else. Young girls are all the same—the very best of them. A fellow of that sort with his pockets full of money was able to give her all she'd never had, not with her parents nor with us either—what all girls of our class pine for in secret, if they daren't say it right out—soft beds to lie in, servants to wait on 'em, pretty clothes costing Heaven knows what."

"*I* see," said Mrs. Dibden.

"They're taken with the glitter of it—the *excitement*. Mrs. Dibden, you can't blame them, because the foolishness is put into them by Nature and it passes from them when they grow older and wiser. But there it is. And any bad man—with the money to buy—can take advantage of it. Like this blackguard, Eustace Fenn, did."

"Then, if that was his power," said Mr. Arnold, eagerly, "it's been gone from him long ago. As my wife says, you shall have the whole truth. In the beginning—a year after we had her home—he wrote and sent her a little money. I stopped the letter and sent the money back to him, without a word to her. Then perhaps a year after that he came to our house—when Clara fortunately was out of the way—and I warned him never to do such a thing again. I saw then that he was going downhill. And not more than a year ago I heard, by a side wind, that he had fallen very low—spent his last shilling, as I was told on good authority. Since then I've intercepted another letter from him."

"Oh, you have! What did he say in his letter?"

"He told her that he was down on his luck and in want—and he asked for her to see him. I answered him. And, you'll understand, I've never told Clara."

"And you believe that since they parted she's never had word from him, written or spoken?"

"I'm sure of it."

"Nor never wanted to?"

"No, on my honour, Mrs. Dibden. Surely you can't doubt her? You've seen for yourselves—you know what her life has been. Seven years, Mrs. Dibden. Seven long years."

Then Henry broke in. He had pulled himself together and he spoke resolutely.

"It doesn't matter. Nothing shall come between us. Mother said it made a difference. It doesn't—not to me. I won't let it. Mother, I can't give her up—it would just kill me now," and his violent emotion gave his voice queerly harsh tones. "She was only a girl then. I agree with Mr. Arnold. Over and done with." As he said this he was crossing the room towards the door. "It's what she is now—not what she was then. I'll go and tell her so. Yes, I want to be alone with her—and to tell her I don't mind."

But they stopped him.

"No," said his mother, "don't you see her to-night. You stay quietly here. We must all sleep on this." And somehow they made him yield to them. "Whatever you have to say, you'll say it better to her in the morning, after a night's rest. Hush; no more of it."

Her servant had come into the room.

"What do you want, Nellie?"

The servant announced that umbrellas had been sent for Mr. and Mrs. Arnold.

"Oh, thank you," said Mr. Arnold. "I'm much obliged."

"And your niece, sir, wished to know if there was any message for her."

Mr. Arnold looked at Mrs. Dibden.

"Give the message," she said, after the slightest possible hesitation, "that her uncle and aunt are staying to supper. Then come back and lay the table. Father, move the lamp."

Mr. Arnold drew a deep breath, a breath of intense relief, and glanced at his wife, who imperceptibly, except to him, nodded her head. It was a dead weight lifted from them. For that invitation was significant. Things were going to be all right. The young man was splendidly staunch, and the parents meant to let the marriage go forward.

III.

THE tramp moved; he was at the bottom of the steps.

"Go away," said Clara, nervously. "I have nothing to give you."

"Yes, shelter from the rain. You wouldn't refuse that to a dog—much less to anybody you know as well as you know me."

With the sound of his voice, fear clutched at her heart, and almost stopped it beating. "Who is it?" she said, faintly, and instinctively drew back.

"Friend," said the man; and he laughed. "That's the word. Now it's your turn. Say, 'All's well. Pass, friend!'"

"Who is it?" she repeated, shrinking back in horror. "Oh, God! Eustace, is it you?"

"Of course it is. Who else? Well, I suppose I can come in out of the rain?"

"No, you can't, you can't," she cried, frantically. "I tell you, you mustn't come in."

But he entered the house, closed the door behind him, and as she still shrank back step by step, he followed her into the brightly-lit sitting-room.

"What's the matter with you, Clara? And where are your people?"

"They are out, but they may be back at any minute. They mustn't find you here." She stood at a distance from him, as far from him as she could get, and she seemed to be shaking from head to feet; and her eyes looked large and black in her dead-white face. If there had appeared to be something tragic in her manner and gestures an hour or so ago, she was now tragedy personified. She watched his movements as if with invincible dread. When he closed the sitting-room door she uttered a cry. "Oh, why have you come back? Why have you come back—like this—to-night?"

"What do you mean by 'like this'? What did you expect?" He said this in a grumbling, querulous tone. "I told you I was beat to the world."

"To-night of all nights!" she moaned, despairingly. "To remind me of everything I wanted to forget. Oh, it's wicked and cruel. Why have you done it?"

He shrugged his shoulders, and almost unconcernedly drew a chair to the fire and sat there warming himself.

The sight of him was terrible to her; it filled her with a horror so great that at first she scarcely felt indignation. He had the deplorably forlorn appearance of a person who has fallen from a soft and protected life to the lowest and most abject struggle for existence; the worn-out garments that he wore were of good material and totally unsuited to withstand toil or weather; his fashionably-shaped jacket of smooth dark cloth was soaked through with rain; his originally neat town-like trousers were frayed above the broken patent-leather boots, and torn at the knees. He took off his hat, put it in the fender to dry, showing her his dark straight hair all damp upon his white forehead. He had no gloves, no stick, no overcoat. Outwardly, he seemed just such a miserable, helpless wayfarer as the police would take in charge before the night was over; and yet beneath this wreckage and shame she could see the man as he had once been—as he had been when she loved him. And his voice was very little changed; every tone of it—especially

that insolent grumbling tone of complaint—was echoing through and through her. This was the most terrible part of it.

"Why are you so down on me? I haven't come to beg—I don't mean to bother you."

"Then why have you come?"

"To say good-bye."

"We said good-bye many years ago."

"No, my dear, to be accurate, we didn't." As he said this he laughed, and looked round at her; and she saw, quite plainly, the undisfigured features of his shaven face, the half-contemptuous smile, the sort of devil-may-care handsomeness that had taken possession of her poor trembling little heart all those years ago. "You deserted me, Clara, if you remember, without any good-byes. That was wrong—you were not a prisoner." He said this grumblingly. "I shouldn't have tried to detain you against your wish. No," and he began to cough.

IT was a violent access of coughing, and while it lasted she came from the wall and stood at the far side of the hearth, looking down at him. As she stood there her dread of him lessened. She pitied him.

"Are you ill?"

"No," he said. "It's nothing—I only caught my breath," and, ceasing to cough, he smiled. Then he touched his chest. "A certain emptiness. I haven't had anything to eat since the morning."

"Eustace! Listen," she said, eagerly. "I'll get you some food—and I'll give you some money—if you'll promise to go away at once."

But he refused the food, and said he should not dream of taking money from her.

"Why not? I—I can't let you go hungry and penniless. I think what I said—that it's cruel of you to molest me, but——"

He held up his hand—exactly as he used to do in the old days—to check her; a gesture that was a command; and, as in that bygone time, she obeyed it.

"Man does not live by bread alone. Besides, I shall have a good meal when I get back to London. And as to money, I shall have that too. Yes, a turn of Fortune's wheel." And he laughed and coughed.

Then he told her that he was being set upon his legs by a rich friend who had lain under some obligation to him in the past. To-morrow he would be given a decent outfit; and on the day after he would start for Northern Canada.

"But I wanted to see you, Clara—I wanted, well, just to say I was sorry for all that upset, and to ask you to wish me luck. Can't you bring yourself to do that?"

The sitting-room door opened, and Agnes on the threshold stared in amazement.

"I beg pardon, miss. I didn't know there was anyone with you."

"It's all right, Agnes. Did you want anything?"

"Only to tell you, miss, they've got the umbrellas—and Mr. Arnold sent a message that he and Mrs. Arnold would have supper there."

"So much the better, Clara," said the unwelcome visitor, with a short laugh.

Still startled, Agnes looked at him wonderingly; and yet, as Clara noticed, quite respectfully. He had got up from his chair and was standing in a careless attitude, with an elbow on the mantelshelf; and as if miraculously, the deplorable signs of want and misery had vanished from him. Or something in his manner, his careless self-possession, the look of his eyes, seemed now to prevent one seeing the torn coat and the worn-out boots. In the sense of the word as Mr. Arnold used it, he seemed to the maidservant a gentleman—a very shabby gentleman, perhaps an eccentric gentleman, but nevertheless an undoubted representative of that superior class; and it did not even strike her as odd that he should call the young mistress by her Christian name. She withdrew, wondering who he might happen to be, but with no inclination to run for help to the police.

"I am glad your uncle and aunt won't be coming back for a bit. I don't care about seeing them. They were always prejudiced against me."

"Not without reason, Eustace."

"Look here. Tell that girl she can go to bed."

"Indeed I shall not."

"Yes. Why not? Are you afraid of me?"

"No—of course I'm not afraid of you."

"Very well. I shall be gone in a quarter of an hour."

Without a word she left the room, and returning presently, put a tray upon a little table near him.

"Here's some bread and cheese and biscuits. It's all there is. I wish you'd eat something."

"Did you send the girl to bed?"

"Yes."

He laughed. "And food too! You kind and thoughtful Clara. You were always like that—wanting to take care of people and look after them. Don't you remember? But, my dear, I'm not hungry. Here—to please you." And he picked up a biscuit, ate half of it, and tossed the other half into the fire. "Heavens, how I missed you—and all your motherly little ways! It was the beginning of the end when you chucked

Suddenly he had taken her in his arms and she was fighting with him.
"You brute—leave me alone."

me. I was never worth anything after that."

"Nor before either," she said, bitterly. "How can you say these things—as if I—*I*—was the one to blame?"

"Oh, hang the blame! Life isn't long enough for allotting blame. I blame myself now for letting you slip through my fingers—that's all. What's the matter? I suppose I may look at you?"

He had taken one of her hands, and, shivering, she tried to free herself. But he took her other hand as well; and she stood, white and breathless, facing him yet shrinking from him to the full length of her arms.

"Yes, by Jove, you've developed—you've developed. You're a fine woman, Clara. You've lost, of course, but you've gained. You're no longer my little fretful girl."

"Eustace! Let me go."

"But you're something stronger and better. Yes, you're a fine woman. What, is the very touch of me so hateful?"

Quite suddenly he released her, and leaning his arm on the mantelshelf he looked at the fire.

"Why? We had some good times together, old girl. We were young, for one thing." And he went on talking, as if to himself.

"Stop," she said, beginning to shiver again. "I don't want to remember it—I won't remember it."

"Very well. But, remember or not, I think it was rotten of you not to answer my letter."

"What letter?"

At first he would not believe that she had not received the letter, and then after her eager protestations he told her how he had written a few months ago saying that he was in great want and imploring her to see him if only for five minutes.

"Those old fossils of yours suppressed it, I suppose."

"Yes. I am sorry. They must have. They meant well, but it was wrong of them." She was walking about the room now in agitation. "Eustace, I don't say I would have consented to see you. But I would have tried to help you."

"Oh, that's of no consequence—and the help has come from someone else. But I'm glad to think you didn't do the stony silence trick on purpose. That wasn't *like* you—that wouldn't have been worthy of you." As he said this he stretched himself. "'So now, Eustace Fenn,' as they'd say in the melodramas, 'let the new life begin. You are to be given a second chance in a fresh strange land. Be a man and redeem the past.'" He laughed, and his voice had the querulous note that she knew so well. "Dashed inviting—eh? To *rough* it at the back of beyond—fight the grisly bear by day and be frozen in a log-cabin at night. When summer comes work in the golden fields, or help to load grain on a lake steamer. Oh, yes, ripping fun—for a lad of my age." And as he looked at her she noticed the old familiar droop of the lips that showed always in his moments of depression. "Do you realize that I shall be forty next year? Forty! But solid, as the French say"; and tapping his chest he began to cough again.

"Eustace," she said, "I hope it mayn't be as hard as you think. I hope you'll do well—and soon get out of the rough work."

"Thank you, my dear."

"And you must take care of yourself. That cough needs attention. Don't neglect it."

'Sit down," he said, abruptly. "I must be going. I can't stay talking here all night." He had seated himself and was warming his thin hands at the fire; and that tone of querulousness deepened. He talked to her now exactly as he used to do in the final months of their companionship when they quarrelled, or rather when he quarrelled with her and forced her to defend herself.

In truth it was another nearly inconceivable scene. They sat one on each side of the hearth, accusing each other; almost, one might say, *nagging* at each other.

"You oughtn't to have left me. It was heartless. You knew how I should long for you—how I should suffer. But you didn't care."

"It was you who didn't care," she cried, indignantly. "It was you who had never cared. Oh, I knew you'd soon find other women."

"I didn't—not for a long time. Besides, all other women were different. They had cared for other people before me. You hadn't. Not anyone. Believe it or not—but that was the only time it has ever happened to me. It makes a fellow feel different about a girl." He had raised his voice wrathfully, but he dropped it as he said these words. Then he spoke in a tone of grumbling contempt. "But you can't understand this. Women don't have such feelings. It's all the same to them—Tom, Dick, or Harry!"

She protested with bursting indignation.

"Oh, you've had other men since."

"Not—not till now."

"Not till now! What d'you mean by that?"

"I am going to be married." And she told him about her engagement.

" Oh, so that's it "; and he shrugged his shoulders, and went on grumblingly. " Well, don't think I want to interfere with your marriage. I'd have married you myself. I always meant to."

" You didn't. Eustace, what's the good of telling such lies? I was with you for the better part of a year and you never gave me the least hope—never said one word——"

" Listen." He checked her authoritatively. " I'll marry you to-morrow, if you like."

" *Eustace!* "

" Yes," he said, eagerly. " Come to Canada. Clara, with you I'll do all right. You'll put hope and courage into me. You'll give me back my youth and strength. Come with me."

He had got up from his chair. She, too, rose, and faced him.

" Eustace, what are you asking me? Are you mad? "

Oh, if anybody had been there to see him exercising his power over her! Mrs. Arnold said that the power was derived from money—she had been tempted by the glitter and excitement of life; but now he was offering her hardship and cold; he was tempting her to abandon comfort, ease, everything, to go half across the world to find a wilderness instead of a home. And she stood as if fascinated by his eager words, the pleading look in his eyes, the hands that he stretched out towards her. She shivered and gasped, twisting her body but never taking her eyes from his face.

" Chuck this little cad. It would be too absurd to throw yourself away like that. For what—good heavens, for what? Why, just to be married—just to be called Mrs. Somebody or other."

" No—you're mean and cruel to say so "; and she burst into tears and wrung her hands.

" Dear old thing, I don't mean to be cruel—but, of course, I understand. It's the cursed British conventionality that governs every relation of life—and your uncle and aunt have pushed you on. Of course you don't care for the fellow—but anything to get married."

" No—no."

" Yes—yes. Marriage! But the church service isn't all. *I* am your husband—your real husband—and you know it."

" I don't. It isn't true."

" Clara—deny it if you dare. Marrying other men is no use to you. It won't give you what you really want. Poor little, silly darling! I can read your thoughts. I am the only person on earth to marry whom will rehabilitate your pride—wipe out what you feel as a stain—in fact, *put you straight with yourself.* Other people may not see this, but *you* do—you know it's true."

" I don't—I won't," and she gave a cry.

SUDDENLY he had taken her in his arms and she was fighting with him.

" You brute—leave me alone."

" No. What! Would you bite? " And he laughed. " How fierce you've grown! You're as bad as the grisly bears."

" Let me go! " she cried.

But he held her fast against his rain-sodden body; he kissed her cheeks, her eyes, her lips.

" There—you belong to me. I'm only claiming my rights. Don't be afraid of me. To-morrow I'll be properly dressed—I'll be washed and clean—smelling quite nice again—your own boy."

" Oh, have pity! " she sobbed. " Don't make me do it. Leave me alone."

He obeyed her. As suddenly as he had seized her he released her. He pushed her away from him, and sat down on the other side of the hearth.

" No, by God, you sha'n't do it. I won't let you do it. It would be too much of a sacrifice." No one could have doubted that he spoke sincerely, that his compunction and remorse were genuine. " Forget all I said. Clara, I didn't mean it—I was only playing on your feelings. No, you sha'n't be sacrificed. Marry your boat-builder. One wedding ring's as good as another."

She went to him and put her hand on his shoulder.

" Eustace, I'll go with you. I want to go with you."

" No, you sha'n't," and he spoke again in that queer grumbling tone. " I—I mustn't let you."

" Yes."

He sprang to his feet and stood looking at her.

" Do you mean it? Are you really coming? "

" Yes—to-morrow."

" No—it's now or never. If I leave you here they won't let you go. Never mind about your clothes. They don't belong to you. I'll buy you others. Look sharp. Come on."

" Then I must leave a letter for them," and she sat at her desk just beyond the cottage piano. " I must write and say—oh, what shall I say to them? "

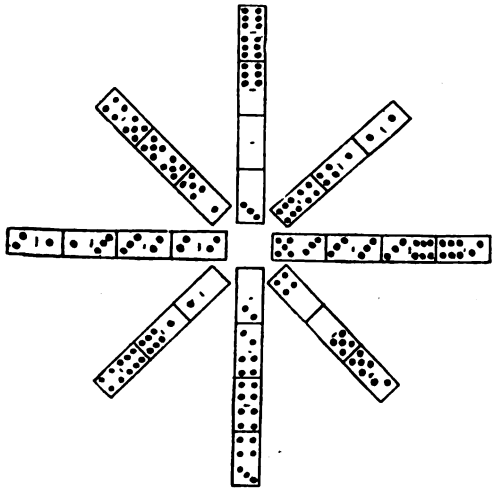
" Say I've claimed you."

PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

670.—A DOMINO STAR.

PLACE the twenty-eight dominoes, as shown in the illustration, so as to form a star with alternate rays of four and three dominoes. Every ray must contain



twenty-one pips (in the example only one ray contains this number) and the central numbers must be 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and two blanks, as at present, and these may be in any order. In every ray the dominoes must be placed according to the ordinary rule, six against six, blank against blank, and so on.

671.—CROSSING THE FERRY.

SIX persons, all related, have to cross a river in a small boat that will only hold two. Mr. Webster, who had to plan the little affair, had quarrelled with his father-in-law and his son, and, I am sorry to say, Mrs. Webster was not on speaking terms with her own mother or her daughter-in-law. In fact, the relations were so strained that it was not safe to permit any of the belligerents to pass over together or to remain together on the same side of the river. And to prevent further discord, no man was to be left with two women or two men with three women. How are they to perform the feat in the fewest possible crossings? No tricks, such as making use of a rope or current, or swimming across, are allowed.

672.—AN OLD ENIGMA.

"CHARGE, Chester, charge! On, Stanley, on!
Were the last words of Marmion."
If I were put in Stanley's place
When Marmion urged him to the chase,
In me you quickly would descry
What draws a tear from many an eye.

673.—THREE NINES.

I AM frequently asked to give the largest number that can be expressed with three nines and arithmetical signs. Thus, $9 \times 9 \times 9 = 729$, but this is beaten by $99 \times 9 = 891$, which is again beaten by the simple form 9 9 9. This again is easily beaten, but can you find the largest number possible?

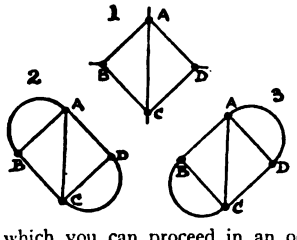
674.—A CHARADE.

MY *first* is a prop, my *second* is a prop, and my *whole* is a prop.

SOLUTIONS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES.

665.—THE NINE BRIDGES.

TRANSFORM the map as follows. Reduce the four islands, A, B, C, and D, to mere points and extend the bridges into lines, as in fig. 1, and the conditions are unchanged. If you link A and B for outside communication, and also C and D, the conditions are as in fig. 2; if you link A and D and also B and C, you get fig. 3. You cannot link these outside bridges in any other way without having to cross a track. In each case B and D are "odd nodes" (points from which you can proceed in an odd number of ways, three), so in every route you must start and finish at B or D, to go over every line once, and once only. Therefore, Tompkins must live at B or D: we will say B, and place Johnson at D. There are 44 routes by scheme 2 and 44 by scheme 3, making 88 in all, not counting reverse routes as different. Taking fig. 2 and calling the outside curved lines O, if you start B O A B, B O A C, B A O B, or B A C, there are 6 ways of continuing in each case. If you start B O A D, B A D, B C O D, B C A, or B C D, there are always 4 ways of continuing. In the case of fig. 3, B O C A, B O C B, B C A, or B C O B give 6 ways. B O C D, B A O D, B A C, B A D, or B C D give 4 ways each.

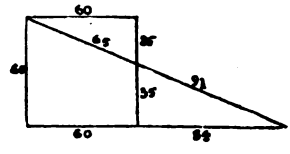


666.—WORD BUILDING.

I, IT, tie, Diet, edict, credit, predict, decrepit, receipted, depreciate.

667.—A FENCE PROBLEM.

THE diagram gives all the measurements. Generally a solution involves a biquadratic equation, but as I said the answer was in "*exact* feet," the square of 91 is found to be the sum of two squares in only one way—the squares of 84 and 35. Insert these numbers as shown and the rest is easy and proves itself. The required distance is 35ft.



668.—ALPHABETICAL ARITHMETIC.

$$\begin{array}{r} 93 \\ 4 \times 17 = 68 \\ \hline 25 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

669.—AN ENIGMA.

THE answer is TIME.

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—7.

by

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

LONDE threw the copy of *The Times* which he had been reading across to his wife, and stood upon the hearth-rug of the somewhat Victorian-looking drawing-room, scowling. They had settled down for a few months in a remote corner of Surrey.

"Read that, Judith," he invited.

She stretched out a lazy hand, drew the paper towards her, and read the paragraph aloud :—

> "£1,000 *reward will be paid for any information as to the present whereabouts of Sir Joseph Londe, Bart., late of Melbourne, Australia, Surgeon-Major in His Majesty's Forces.—Apply Box* 117, *Offices of this Journal.*"

Judith looked up and laughed with the pleased interest of a child.

"Why, that must mean you, Joseph!" she exclaimed. "Somebody seems to want you very badly."

He looked at her with an evil light in his brilliant eyes—eyes which seemed during the last few months to have narrowed and to have receded in his head.

"Somebody wants me," he repeated, bitterly. "I know who it is, of course. It is that arch-lunatic in this world of lunatics, Daniel Rocke. I know what he wants, too. He wants to hang me."

"How ridiculous!" she murmured. "Are people ever hanged nowadays?"

"You have not much intelligence, Judith," he went on, dropping his voice a little, although they were alone in the room, "but you know what has happened, of course—the war has sent every living human creature mad. I could see it coming. I foretold it in the *Lancet* and all the medical papers. I even warned them in an article I sent to the *Fortnightly*, which they never published. I felt it coming like the end of the world. It is a horrible thing, Judith, to be the only sane person amongst all the hundreds of millions in the universe."

Copyright, 1923, by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

"What about me?" she asked, with an empty laugh.

"You are mad, of course," he answered, scornfully, "but that does not matter. You are beautiful, and that's all that matters with you. It is your very insanity which keeps your skin as soft as a baby's, your forehead unwrinkled, which gives you the strength never to tire. But think of the horror of the situation for me. I have the brain of a million scientists in one. I am solving every day in my mind problems which have baffled the world for generations, and yet, at any moment, I am liable to be arrested by lunatic detectives, tried by a lunatic judge and twelve lunatic jurymen, and hanged by a lunatic hangman. All this because I am the only sane person in the world!"

She smiled reassuringly. She was lying on a couch by the window, her hands clasped behind her head.

"Don't think of it, dear," she begged. "You are too clever, far too clever, for them. Think how they try to catch us sometimes, and how we always move on when we choose. A world of lunatics have no chance against a sane man like you."

He nodded assentingly, but still with gloom.

"That is true," he admitted, "but mad people are sometimes very cunning. Not mad people like you," he continued, after a moment's pause. "You are just silly—soft, the country folk call it. But a man like Griggs! I have been watching Griggs lately. I have come to the conclusion that he is no longer trustworthy."

"What a pity!" she murmured. "He has been so useful, and we must have somebody."

"I am afraid," Londe observed, with a peculiar smile, "that his days of utility are over. I have made a most interesting experiment upon him. I was obliged to do it as a matter of self-preservation, but I am afraid it means that he will be of little use to us in the future."

"Poor Griggs!" she sighed. "What have you done?"

"I have closed up the other cells in his mind," Londe confided. "He is now not only mad but a hopeless imbecile. It was quite an interesting experiment."

She clapped her hands.

"What fun!" she exclaimed. "I must see him at once."

"You will be very interested," Londe assured her. "I flatter myself that there is no one living who could have done with that man what I have done."

He rang the bell and waited. A curious expression of vanity stole into his face. Griggs, pale-faced, stout, of unpleasant appearance, stumbled in. He was carrying a small bunch of flowers—dejected-looking buttercups and daisies.

"Thou didst ring, my liege?" he bawled. "Thy wish! Quick, thy wish!"

"What are you doing with those rubbishy flowers?" his master demanded.

"Rubbishy! Why, they are carnations fair, for Phyllis Dare," the fat man warbled. "As a matter of fact," he went on, confidentially, "Harry Tate and José Collins are lunching with me in the kitchen to meet the mother-in-law of the President of the United States—dear old lady, but just a little——" He tapped his forehead understandingly. "Flowers always soothe her."

LONDE had adopted, and was practising to perfection, the attitude of the understanding and humouring visitor to the insane. He smiled pleasantly.

"And what are you giving them for lunch, Griggs?" he inquired. "You must feed such distinguished company well."

"Sire," was the confident reply, "all is arranged. I have ransacked the cellars of the Café Royal and the larders of monarchs. I have tripe from the private store of the King of the Pearlies for the mother-in-law of the President, a peacock from the garden of the Emperor of China for José Collins, and steak from the carcass of the pet alligator of the Sun God for Harry Tate. The grub's all right."

"Capital," Londe murmured. "And the wine?"

"Golden Tokay for all from the cellars of the Lord Mayor of all the Hungaries, with a gallon of half-and-half for Harry Tate straight from the Golden Lion," was the boastful announcement. "The booze is tip-top."

"You had better go and attend to your guests now," Londe enjoined, kindly. "Present my compliments and best wishes to all."

"Aye, aye, my master mariner!" Griggs acquiesced, with one hand behind his back and making a strenuous attempt at the first steps of the hornpipe. "I do thy bidding, my liege."

He departed, closing the door behind him. Londe looked vaingloriously towards his wife. His expression of self-satisfaction interfered curiously with the normal strength of his face.

"Well, what do you think of that?" he demanded. "The result of barely an hour's treatment."

Judith laughed immoderately, laughed till the tears stood in her eyes. Londe waited patiently for her verdict. When it came it surprised him.

" And you call me soft ! " she exclaimed, mockingly. " You call me silly ! You think I have no brain ! "

" What do you mean ? " he asked, suspiciously.

" Mean ! Why, a special ward case could tell that Griggs isn't mad at all," she declared. " He was shamming all the time. He picked up that stuff in the asylum where he used to look after us. I heard it often myself."

She went off again into peals of laughter. Londe, for a moment, seemed stupefied. Then his face darkened. His expression became murderous.

" If I believed that ! " he muttered.

" Pooh ! " she scoffed. " I may be soft and silly, but even I could see that he was acting. Follow him downstairs in a few minutes, Joseph, and listen to him talking to Mrs. Griggs. Follow him silently. You know how to do it."

" I will," he assented. . . . .

Griggs, on his return to the kitchen, seated himself at the table and resumed the letter from which his master's bell had summoned him. Mrs. Griggs put her head in from the scullery. Her change of occupation from wardress of an asylum to housekeeper had not softened the harsh outlines of her face.

" Well ? " she asked. " Is it going all right ? "

" All right with the old josser, anyhow," her husband replied. " He listens all the time as proud as a parent with his new-born child, chuckling away to himself like anything. He's like that visiting superintendent, old Robinson, they had down at Chigwell. Worst of it is, I've about worked off all the old stuff I can remember on him."

" And what about madam ? " Mrs. Griggs inquired. " I'm thinking sometimes she's not such a softy as she seems."

Her husband's air of self-satisfaction was momentarily clouded.

" Hanged if I can quite size up madam," he confessed. " She watches and listens all the time with that baby smile on her face, but I've seen her laughing to herself sometimes, just as though she understood. Anyhow, the old man is sopping it up. That's all that matters."

His better half departed and Griggs settled down to his letter. He read it over as far as he had gone :—

Honoured Sir,

Replying to your ad. in " The Times," I can put you on to Londe and shall be glad to handle the thousand quid.

I know all about him, for I was his warder in Chigwell Asylum and I am now in his service, also my wife. I was with him at the house in Salisbury Plain and helped him to trick the cops. If I give you the office now——

The pen seemed suddenly to become wax in his fingers and a great fear went through him, like the shiver of death. He had heard no footsteps, yet he knew that he was not alone. Someone was standing behind his chair. He made an effort. Useless ! There was a quick hissing sound, a faint cloud of vapour—no more than a whiff of cigarette smoke—and the strength went from his limbs like the last gasp from an empty soda-water siphon. Londe stood back and looked at him.

" What a fool you are, Griggs ! " he said, scornfully.

The man had no strength, mental or physical, to reply. Londe called for his wife.

" Mrs. Griggs," he inquired, as she came hurrying in from the other room, ' do you know anything of this letter ? "

" Nothing, so help me God ! " the woman declared, piteously.

Londe tore it into small pieces. Griggs, stricken in his chair, was gasping, with wide-open terrified eyes.

" Look at him, and remember," Londe enjoined. " I could do the same to you if I were a thousand miles off. I could reach you if you travelled round the world. You know that. You have never known me fail."

The woman disappeared muttering. Londe smiled. He turned back to his quondam butler.

" You feel as though you were going to die," he observed, " but you are not—not, at any rate, until I say the word. Nasty sensation, though, isn't it, to feel your heart slipping through your boots ? "

" Give me something," the man groaned. " I am dying."

Londe felt his pulse.

" Nerves," he pronounced, calmly. " Now, pull yourself together. You have a letter to write for me."

DANIEL ROCKE passed the letter across to Ann as soon as he had read it.

" What do you think of that ? " he asked.

She perused it carefully :—

Honoured Sir,

Seeing your advertisement in " The Times," I can put you into touch with Joseph Londe, as I am now living in the same house with him. I know him well, as I was a warder in Chigwell Asylum, and he was there. My wife and I have been

cook and butler to him most of the time since.

My terms would be a thousand pounds down and no questions asked about me and my wife helping in the escape from the house in Salisbury Plain. If agreeable to you, motor slowly along the road between Cobham and Ripley, near four o'clock, to-morrow, with a white handkerchief tied to the right-hand door of the car.

Your obedient servant,

John Griggs.

The light flamed in Ann's eyes, her lips trembled, her wonderful air of self-possession seemed gone.

"Is there any reason why this shouldn't be genuine?" she asked.

"No, I don't know that there is," Daniel admitted. "It sounds all right. From what I can remember of the man Griggs, I should think he would sell his soul for a thousand pounds."

"If this were only the end!" she murmured, passionately. "Shall we go down in the Crossley?"

"We?"

"Naturally. You know why I am here. It was always understood that we hunted Joseph Londe together."

"That's all very well," Daniel replied, "and I haven't left you out of it much, have I? But this is a different affair. The man we are hunting may be a lunatic, but it is foolish to forget for a moment that he is as cunning as any sane man could be. Remember he has probably seen this advertisement as well as Griggs. The letter may be a trap."

She laughed at him.

"Well, I suppose you'll take a few reasonable precautions," she observed. "You'll have to tell Sir Francis about it, and he will come along behind."

"Nice idiots we should look, motoring along the roads with a white handkerchief tied to the handle of our door," Daniel grumbled.

"People will think we have just been married," she remarked, demurely.

"If we had, I shouldn't mind so much," he declared, with unwonted gallantry. "Anyhow, I'm not going to take you."

"I can bicycle," she pointed out defiantly.

"You will be needed here to look after the office."

"The office can look after itself for one afternoon," she persisted. "Besides, the place only exists, so far as I am concerned, as the headquarters from which to hunt this man. It is no good, Mr. Rocke; I am not going to sit here and wait while you are after Londe."

"I don't know that to-morrow is going to bring us in touch with him at all," he reminded her. "All that this man promises is information as to his whereabouts."

"I am not running any risk of being left out, anyhow," she assured him, with a final note of defiance in her tone. . . . .

SO she went, as Daniel always knew that she would, notwithstanding his remonstrances, and it was not until they had passed through Cobham and had commenced to crawl that he was conscious of any real uneasiness. Even then he felt that it was scarcely reasonable. Close behind, although kept carefully out of sight, was a police car containing Sir Francis, Windergate, and two highly qualified subordinates. His own automatic was close to his hand and he had made up his mind to shoot at the slightest signs of treachery. For himself he felt nothing but a pleasurable thrill of excitement. He knew perfectly well that the nervousness at the back of his mind was wholly connected with the girl who sat by his side. Excitement became Ann well, except that her eyes were a little too pitilessly bright, her mouth drawn into a shade too straight a line. She was intensely alive—a human magnetic force. At that moment of crisis Daniel felt the rush of strange thoughts. He was suddenly convinced that his own attitude towards her had been unsympathetic and arbitrary. Sir Francis had never concealed his admiration. Windergate had gone even farther. He alone had been content to remain the employer, the grumpy middle-aged man. The only tie between them had been one of a common fierce desire to hunt down this man. Now they were passing into danger and he began to see certain things in life with singular and disconcerting clearness. Ann, on the other hand, was entirely absorbed in their immediate object. She was leaning a little forward, her eyes searching the country.

"We ought to be seeing something of Mr. Griggs shortly," Daniel remarked.

She turned her head to look at him. His tone was unusual. Then she looked once more along the level stretch of road and pointed. A very old Ford car was drawn up by the side of the path. The bonnet was open and a man was apparently examining the engine.

"What about that?" she asked.

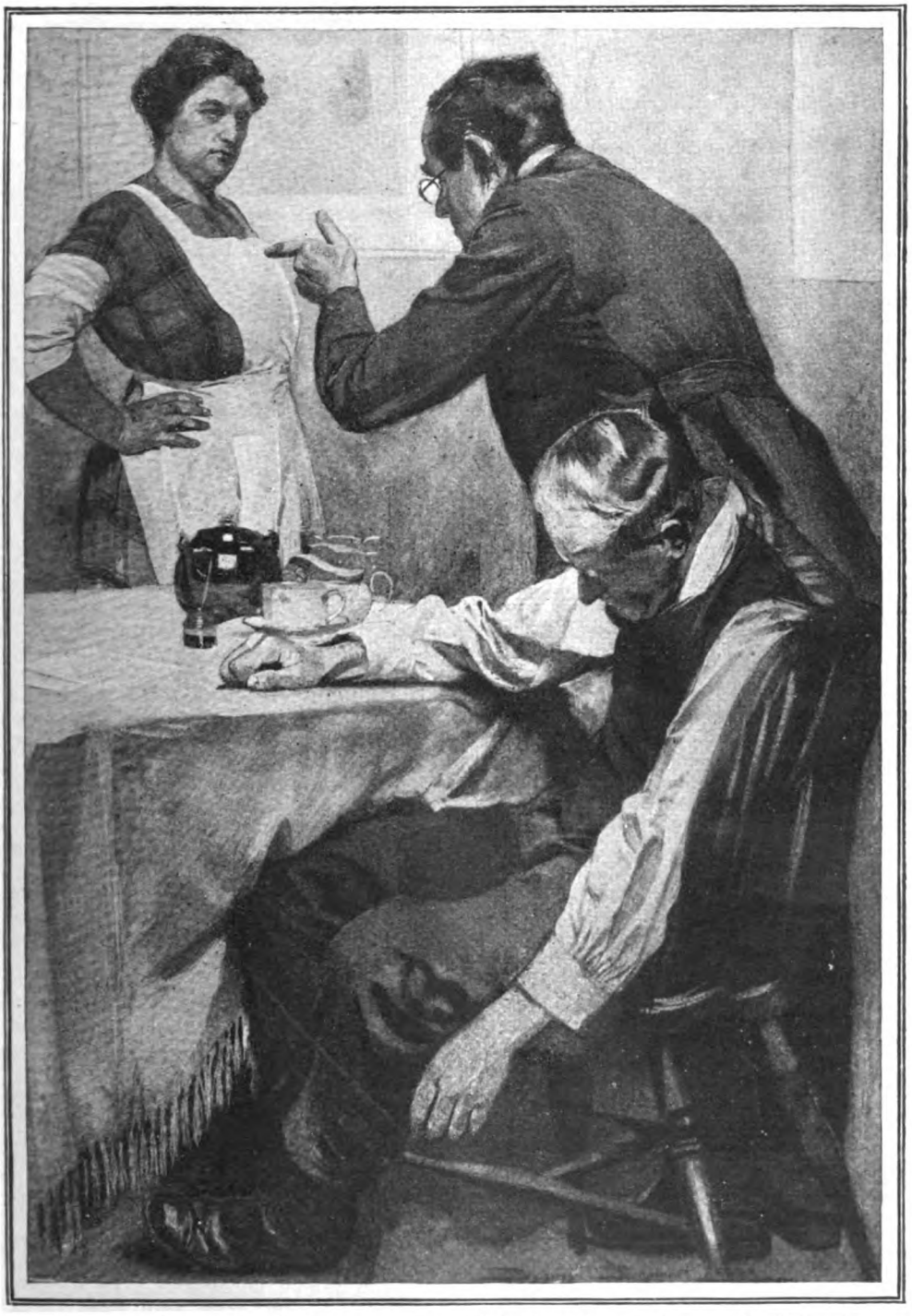
He slackened speed.

"You are not afraid?" he whispered.

"I am afraid of nothing on earth," she answered, "except that Londe may die before we catch him."

"You are a brave girl," he declared.

"I loved my father," she said, simply



Griggs, stricken in his chair, was gasping. "Look at him, and remember," Londe enjoined. "I could do the same to you if I were a thousand miles off."

"The thought of a fiend like that man going about free and plotting more crimes is like a nightmare to me. Look," she went on. "It's the man who took Londe's place on Salisbury Plain. That's Griggs."

The man who had been bending over the bonnet of his car stood up as they drew slowly near. He was almost unrecognizable, pallid, shrunken, and with a strange expression of fear in his bully's face. He was unkempt, unshaven, an exceedingly unconvincing conspirator. Yet, without a doubt, it was Griggs.

Daniel brought the car to a standstill. Griggs took a step forward and caught hold of the wind-screen. He seemed in need of support.

"Have you brought the money, master?" he demanded.

Daniel nodded.

"I have it in my pocket," he said. "It is yours as soon as we can arrest Londe."

"And no questions asked?"

"No questions asked."

Griggs looked doubtfully behind, along the road.

"How many men have you got following?" he asked.

"Three who are used to rough work," Daniel told him, "besides Sir Francis and myself."

"He's a devil," Griggs muttered. "He's Satan himself. That's who he is! You'll never be sure of him until the handcuffs are upon his wrists."

"Bring us to him," Daniel demanded. "That's all we ask of you. We may not wait for the handcuffs."

Griggs wiped the sweat from his forehead.

"I'll be glad when it's over," he groaned, watching the other car slowly approaching. "I wish to God I'd never set eyes on him. You both follow me," he went on, after a moment's miserable pause. "About a mile along the road I shall turn to the left. After that, in another mile, to the right. You will see a drive a few yards along with the gates open, most likely. The house is about another hundred yards back and he's in it. As soon as you get within sight push along for the front door at top speed. He's doing some experiments this morning."

"Don't you turn in there, too?" Daniel asked.

Griggs was closing the bonnet of his own car. He looked up a moment later.

"No; I go on to the back of the house," he explained. "There's another drive leading to the kitchen quarters, and I've got all my groceries to leave. The governor's room looks out that way. You go up to the front and you can be in the house before he hears a thing. The front door's always open and I've hidden the key. Rush the drive, mind."

He lumbered off, and Daniel reported to Sir Francis. The two cars followed the Ford at a reasonable distance. Soon they turned off the main road and a little later once again to the right. They were on a by-road now which seemed to lead to nowhere.

"There's the house all right," Daniel muttered, pointing through the trees. "The lodge gates must be just round the bend."

Ann leaned forward.

"Look out," she warned him, extending her hand to the following car; "the Ford has stopped."

Daniel jammed on his brakes. The two cars crawled round the corner and pulled up behind the Ford. Griggs had descended and was leaning against a gate—his forehead wet, his eyes bloodshot, his colour ghastly. He was like a man facing some ugly death and discovering himself to be a coward.

"I can't do it, governor," he moaned to Daniel. "I'm no saint, but I can't do it. I'm on the double cross. Do you get me?"

"I understand," Daniel said. "Go on."

"Don't you turn in at those gates," the man urged, his voice choked and barely coherent, "not you or the other car. I'm telling you, mind. Leave the cars here in the road and take the footpath through the shrubbery. You'll get to the house almost as quick. And leave the young lady behind. I wish to God I'd never seen him."

GRIGGS climbed back into his car, clumsily, with all the semblance of a drunken man. He was, without a doubt, in a state of mortal terror.

"Why do you want us to leave the cars here?" Daniel demanded, suspiciously. "A few minutes ago you urged us to rush for the house."

"For God's sake don't ask me no questions," the man groaned. "I was on the double cross. I'm straight now, so help me. Keep the young lady out of it."

He started off in the Ford, escaping the ditch only by a few inches. They had all dismounted and were standing in the road.

"Come on, then, we'll try the footpath," Daniel decided. "It will only take a moment or two longer. Miss Lancaster, you come last, please."

Windergate, who had been driving the police car, sprang back into his place.

"I'm taking no chances," he declared, grimly. "That chap may have turned round again. I believe he wants an opportunity to warn Londe. You fellows come on through the shrubbery. I'll make a

A deafening roar seemed to split and tear the air. Daniel, who was leading, threw up his hands and staggered.

rush for it. We can't both be wrong that way."

Daniel opened his lips to protest, but closed them again. After all, Windergate's point of view was reasonable. It was clear that Griggs was almost hysterical with fear. And it was quite plausible that his old dread of Londe should have broken out again. Besides, Windergate was a powerful man and a deadly shot—even alone more than a match for Londe. So the car swept by them and Daniel made for the shrubbery footpath. A queer afternoon stillness seemed to reign everywhere—an ominous and unwholesome silence. Daniel—perhaps every one of them—seemed to sense some coming danger. The car ahead had turned the last bend, they themselves were not far behind, when it was upon them. A deafening roar seemed to split and tear the air. The ground shook beneath their feet. Daniel, who was leading, threw up his hands and staggered, seemed to feel the earth rise up and hit his chin, and doubled over like a shot rabbit. The others, who were behind, saw things which he missed—uprooted trees in the air, a cloud of dust, a shower of small pebbles which came down through the trees like hailstones, and a strange white light, come and gone in a moment, but which made the sunny afternoon seem for a second or two afterwards as though it were wrapped in the mantle of twilight.

Daniel was up again on his feet almost as the others reached him, dazed but unhurt, save for a cut on the forehead. No one spoke. They all raced forward. Daniel was the first round the bend. He turned, holding up both his hands, and shouted to Worton.

"Don't let Miss Lancaster come. For God's sake, keep her back!"

Ann easily evaded Worton's outstretched arm. She was speechless but determined. They all saw what had happened together. The car, a twisted, unrecognizable heap of metal, Windergate more terribly dealt with—his clothing alone could have identified him—a great hole in the road, in which a dozen men could have been buried, a twisted wire, a faint unpleasant smell. Then, after a glance, they all seemed to dismiss the whole matter as unimportant. With one accord they set their faces towards that rather bare white stone house, with its silent windows. A fury was in their blood. Daniel, with the habit of his 'Varsity running days back again in his limbs, headed the line, and he carried in his hand, without concealment, his very ugly automatic pistol. There was no doubt in his mind as to what he was going to do. He was going to shoot Londe on sight. They reached the house. No need to ring. Griggs had kept his word so far that the front door stood wide open. There was a white stone almost circular hall, only partially covered with one shabby mat. In the centre of it a man lay flat on his back, his arms outstretched, stone-dead, with a small bullet hole in his forehead.

Daniel, glancing nervously around, threw a handkerchief over his face.

"Griggs!" he muttered. "That must have been quick work. Londe was here, then, not many seconds ago. Come on."

THEY searched the silent house from attic to basement, and no band of Western lynchers were ever so full of murder in their hearts as those four men with their guns gripped in their hands. Not a word was spoken, not one of them had any other thought but to kill. As the moments passed, a silent despairing fury seized them all. There were everywhere signs of very recent occupation, but nowhere the sound or presence of any human being. The Ford was in the backyard with its engine still throbbing. There was a dying fire in the kitchen, but no one to tend it; food in the larder, but no one to cook it. Upstairs one bed had been slept in, and there were clothes—a man's in one room and a woman's, all perfume and silk and crêpe de Chine, in another. But the clothes were all that remained. Once more Londe seemed to have stepped off the side of the earth.

(Another episode in this thrilling series will appear next month.)

AS I KNOW THEM

Some Famous Authors of To-day

- H.G.WELLS - BERNARD SHAW - H.de VERE STACPOOLE

By MRS C.A.DAWSON-SCOTT

H. G. WELLS.

IN years gone by, my cousin, H. D. Lowry, the Cornish poet, being sorry for me because, while he was at Oxford, I lived in a suburb, used to send me any books he thought above the average. On the happy day of such an event I would supply myself with fruit from our rather wonderful garden and climb into the loft over the stables. The place was retired, the hay made a pleasant couch, and no one thought of looking for me there. Under the little window I could lie and indulge in what Victorian ladies spoke of as " worse than dram-drinking," *i.e.*, novel-reading.

It was Henry Lowry who sent me " Tono-Bungay," and I devoured it with a pocketful of those hard Burgundy pears which, when eaten unripe in sufficient quantities, have such unpleasant after-effects. But if the pears made one sort of impression, the book made quite another. I shall never forget its effect on my contemporaries. A vitalizing influence had been released among us. When we tramped across the Lancashire moors, or sat out in the garden of an evening, the talk turned continuously on " Tono-Bungay " and its author. " The Wheels of Chance," " Love and Mr. Lewisham," had not made on us more impression than the stories, very wonderful in their way but not mentally intriguing, of Rudyard Kipling. " Tono-Bungay " was different; it was a pioneer book, and we were eagerly interested in this mind which cried to us across the darkness of intervening space and set us thinking.

In its dry atmosphere the woolly mists of tradition and romance " folded their tents like the Arabs," while convention, which had ruled the generation then busily engaged in voicing its disapproval of us and our ways—(oh, if those old people could only come to life again and see women in Parliament, on juries, and riding astride !) —fell, when Wells spoke, into its proper place.

I have always suspected that the Jews must have undermined the walls of Jericho before staging that march round with its signal for the touching off of the fuses—and it is the same with other changes. Disintegration had been at work before Wells blew the trumpet. We must have turned a deaf ear to him if our minds had not wearied of the unreality of the Victorian world, if we were not beginning to demand greater freedom of thought and action. As it was we welcomed him as the man who could put into crisp, convincing language what we were all beginning to think. We were converts to his ideas before ever he uttered them ; and when he did, we realized that we had found a spokesman. I don't believe people thought of him as an artist. Anybody, they would have said, could be that ; but only Wells could and did represent his —our—generation. He was, by nature, its spokesman, not chosen but born ; and as we

have matured so has he. The long succession of his books, his questionings of life and eternity, his attitude towards the Great War, his present interest in education, are not only his but ours. He is our representative mind and—he might be any one of us! His innocent description of himself as a little, fat, middle-aged man, who is too lazy to take any exercise other than mental, and not more of that than he can help, fits the rest of us. We, too, we fought for the freedom the young folks take as a matter of course, and now we are a little lazy.

After we read "Tono-Bungay," I suspect most of us sent Mr. Wells our books and poems. I always think of his house at Easton as a place with a big apple-chamber, on the floor of which stand piles of those forgotten books. I imagine a postman permanently bowed under the weight of the parcels, and in that dim, dusty attic stacks and stacks of unopened brown packets!

The writers of to-day must be adding their quota, but for a different reason. Wells is not their spokesman, but a high romantic figure of the past. He has fought his way to fame and fortune; against "fearful odds" he has made good; and they, deeply engaged in weaving the vivid pattern of their lives, would discover what are the qualities which have enabled him to succeed. They send their books out of reverence for those unknown qualities, out of hope that if they stand gazing up the mantle of Elijah may fall on them.

ONE evening, at a party given by the Hueffers in that charming house on Campden Hill, I stood watching a short, quick man with very bright eyes, who was talking to a knot of people. A woman had just said to me, "The person in a room who is the most undistinguished-looking will probably turn out to be the most able," and I was murmuring in reply, "Then the little man over there——" when Mrs. Hueffer came up with him and said, "May I introduce Mr. Wells?"

He is so surprisingly like everybody else that when I next met him I could not think who he might be. I regret to say he grinned with, "Don't you remember me? I'm Arnold Bennett."

And for a moment I believed him.

Quick—yes, that is probably one of the reasons he has been so successful. He sees a thing a second earlier than the next man. He tumbles over himself in his haste to see everything. He forgets that he is he, forgets all but his desire to know.

Copybook virtues are for the benefit of the "poor thing," and are written by the old who have forgotten they were ever young and ambitious. The career of Mr. Wells has negatived many of them. He has no respect for persons, did not do his duty in the state of life in which he found himself; and, in the fixed firmament, proved to be a comet with a tiresomely burny sort of tail.

He was the son of a gardener—"a very good gardener," says Mr. Wells. When, however, the gardener (who was also a well-known cricketer) opened a shop for the sale of bats and so forth, he did not make a success of it. He was probably a bit dreamy, wrapped up in the game rather than its adjuncts. At any rate, that unpleasant event that we call a financial crisis occurred. It resulted in Mr. Wells having to earn his living at the age of thirteen. Not a bad thing, I should say. We cannot learn too early to depend on ourselves.

Mr. Wells does not agree with me. He wanted—it was a curious thing for an English boy to want—but he actually longed to continue his studies.

However, employment was found for him. Like Caradoc Evans, he was set to serve behind a counter, behind several in fact, for he appears to have been uniformly tiresome, and employers saw the last of him with a sigh of relief. When I study the urbane aristocrats who are styled shop-walkers and compare them with that bit of quicksilver that is H. G. Wells, I do not wonder. Shopkeepers had given him long hours, uninteresting food, and little liberty; and he—well, I suspect they suffered too. At length, to make him take his duties seriously, he was bound apprentice to a firm in Southsea, and in utter misery worked with them for two years, two whole wasted years of youth! At the end of that time he said that if his indentures were not cancelled he would break something.

His good parents, you see, had given the boy his chance, had placed him where he might hope to rise, to put by for his old age, to become in time a master man owning his own shop, with the prospect of becoming a guardian of the poor or even a mayor! The boy, however, intent on coming to a bad end, set their wishes at naught, ignored their wise advice, and with no prospects, no money, yet insisted on throwing up a good job. Yes, that is the example H. G. Wells has set the next generation. He has as good as said, "Don't stick to any job unless your heart is in it. Have faith in yourself. Don't be afraid of hard times and poverty and the disapproval of your elders, but butt in and do the thing you want to."

He himself became a rolling stone, and rolled with considerable purpose, and is still rolling. What he wanted was mental adventure, the inside of laboratories, and he specialized in one thing after another, taking

Photo] H. G. WELLS. *[E. O. Hoppé.*

degrees while he supported himself by teaching. He did particularly well in Comparative Anatomy, a subject which to-day appeals more than any other to his sons. Eventually he found his way into literature, but on the way thither he managed to absorb a vast quantity of information, and this forms the background of his books.

Mr. Wells's life has been, in fact, one long exposition of why he has made a success of it; why, instead of becoming a provincial mayor, he is one of the foremost men in England. When the Revolution occurred in Russia, he felt he should like to see the immediate results, and off he rushed, forgetting that there was any danger. He went by sea. To anxious friends waiting for news of him came an unhappy postcard, "Sic transit," but once he reached land he received the welcome which should await the brave. Again, while attending strictly to his own business, he had set an example; for, mark you this, although lots of people have been to Russia since, to study conditions, he was the first.

Those early years of struggle proved and tested H. G. Wells. Like most of our great novelists, he is neither Scottish, Irish, Welsh, but really English, with parents who hailed from Kent and Sussex, and he has certain English characteristics. He is individual, has initiative, relies on himself, and has no respect for authority. He kicked free of the last-mentioned when he decided not to be the good apprentice who marries his master's daughter.

When he said he was willing to stand for Parliament, Labour missed a chance. It might have given him a safe constituency and been represented by one of the most practical brains alive.

I asked him the other day how much autobiography there was in his stories. Being a novelist myself, I knew there could not be any, but I wanted to hear what he would say. We were sitting in his curious sitting-room of dun colour and flame that overlooks the trees and the river at Westminster, and Mr. Wells with meticulous care—the sort of care that justifies his pathetic contention that his early employers found him unsatisfactory because he could not pack a parcel—was making tea. "None whatever," said he, conscientiously warming the pot. "A man's novels tell you where he has been, but not what he has done."

"The house in 'Mr. Britling Sees It Through' is like your country home."

"Well, yes. You see, it adds to the verisimilitude of a story if you lay the scene in some place that you know. Invented houses are all very well, but you are apt to forget the outhouses and the flowerbeds and the bush of lavender that grows under the window. If you take a real house you allude to these details without realizing you have done so, and the picture gains in solidity. I admit it is a lazy device."

"And you aren't even Mr. Polly?"

"I did the little shop from one I worked in, but, no, I'm not Polly."

What I knew of Mr. Wells, the man of a stout heart, who had discovered that traditional concepts were the bugbears of the immature, made me add, "I believe you would have been capable of setting that house afire."

"Oh, I would like a bigger conflagration—all the horribly ugly, inconvenient houses in the world—a holocaust of them!"

BERNARD SHAW.

ALTHOUGH to a romantic mind which delights in the schoolgirlish amorousness of "Romeo and Juliet" Bernard Shaw's dry point of view came as a shock, the further effect—like sea-water when you have grown accustomed to its chill—was pleasant and bracing. I have to thank Mr. Shaw, as I have to thank Ibsen and Capek, for some of the happiest evenings of my life; but whereas the pleasure given me by the two latter is mainly direct, that which I derive from seeing a Shaw play is more complex, for I am interested in the audience as well as in the drama. I observe that the crowded theatre is pleased with the entertainment provided. It laughs consumedly, but—it misses the points made by the dramatist. Although it laughs, it does so neither with him nor at him. This phenomenon was particularly noticeable when "John Bull's Other Island" was being played; and, observing it, I was led to draw certain conclusions about our government of Ireland.

Bernard Shaw's subtle, paradoxical mind must be, to the average Englishman, like a puzzle which, try as he will, he can never resolve. Why, then, are the plays emanating from that mind a success in England? I am inclined to think that the situations appeal to the ordinary theatre-goer and that he deliberately ignores the playwright's point of view. He says, "Shaw happens to think about this human situation like that, but I don't. As I am interested in the development of it, and Shaw, whatever his own opinions, has given that realistically, I go to his play. My mind has been both stimulated and amused, and I have enjoyed my evening." If he were a Frenchman he would add, "Shaw? *Je m'en fiche*"—and, Frenchman or not, that is actually what he does.

The truth of the matter may be that Shaw holds his public, not by his surface freakishness, but by the appeal of his profound subconscious gift for drama.

TOWARDS the end of the war I started a little club for young writers. To be friendless is an experience that befalls most of our ambitious youngsters at the beginning of their career, and it seemed, therefore, as if such a club might be useful. We hired a room and held weekly meetings, at which some well-known person was asked to deliver his experienced mind on subjects of interest to writers. This served to bring the young people in touch with those of their profession who had gained a measure of success.

For five years I found the Thursday lecturers for that little club, and the generosity of people whose time was of value and whose leisure was almost non-existent was something I could not have believed if I had not proved it. Among others whom I approached was Bernard Shaw, and I did so only because the club begged me to. Left to myself—so much in awe of the author of "Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant" was I—I should not have dared.

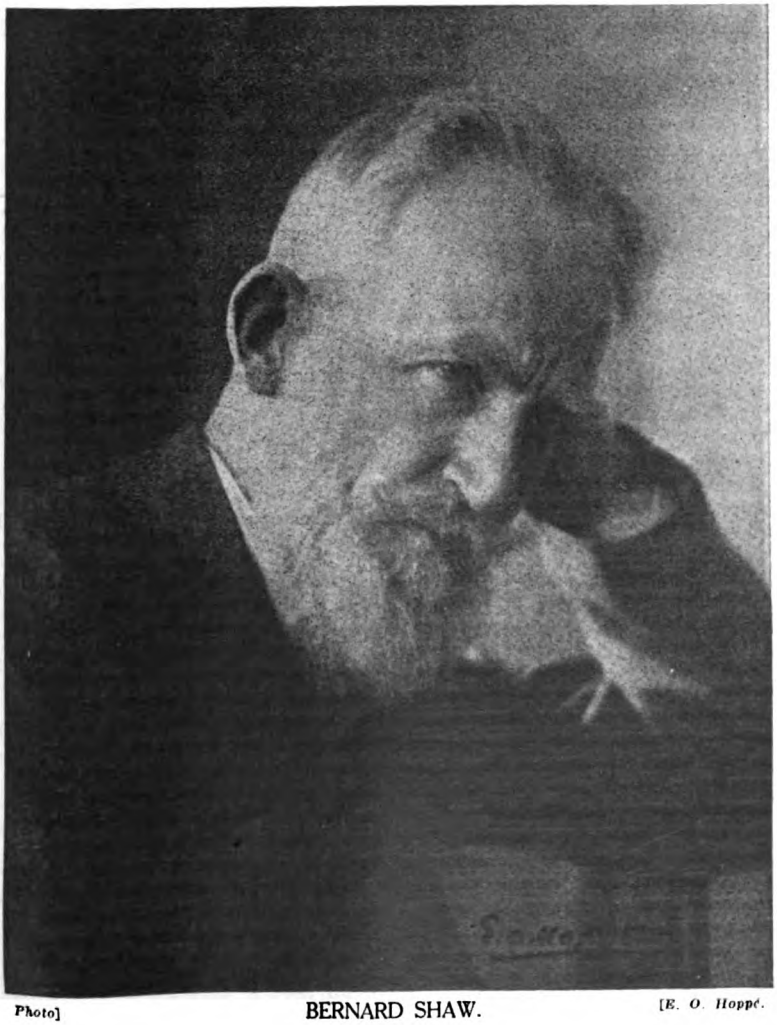
Everybody has heard of the amusing post-

cards he pens—such as the one to his agent in reply to a four-page business letter. In the left-hand corner at the top was the word "No!" In the right-hand corner at the bottom was a tiny "Ha! Ha!"

When I asked him to speak at the To-morrow Club, I expected to get something of that sort; but to my surprise Mr. Shaw replied that he was always in town of a Thursday evening, and if we would fix a date some distance ahead he would be willing to come.

In those days the room in which we met was in Long Acre, and it held, with a squeeze, about a hundred people. On the evening of Mr. Shaw's lecture it held fully that, and those who came late lingered on the stairs, or went away disgruntled with themselves for not having sized up the situation better.

Never having had the good luck to meet Mr. Shaw, I stood by the door, wondering whether he would be flame-tipped physically as well as mentally. A slim, kindly man presently appeared, a man who had become part of the surging crowd. He had curiously blunt fingers and a sort of lightness in which only Cunninghame Graham—whose movement in a room is that of wind made visible—surpasses him; but in the matter of flame-tips Mr. Shaw was a disappointment—for his flame is now white fire. In other ways, too, he proved, not a disappointment, but somewhat of a surprise. The subtle, caustic dramatist, with his world-reputation for searing wit, proved to be a genial, friendly sort of man, with a keen interest in young people and the things of to-day. With his eyes twinkling amiably at the crowd sitting on chairs, boxes, the window seats, the floor,



Photo] BERNARD SHAW. [E. O. Hoppé.

his hands moving in those curiously wooden gestures, he talked like a father to a family of promising children, or a deacon to a Sunday-school class that he hoped to train in ways of godliness! It was such a different Bernard Shaw from the man who had given us the plays.

I can't remember who took the chair for him, but I think it was either Arthur Lynch or Bernard Fagan. At any rate, it was a well-known man, and I remember Mr. Shaw finding fault with me on that account. "Your banquets are too rich," said the vegetarian. "When you have induced one big man to let himself be dished up for your edification, you should not ask another to take the chair. Be frugal and keep him for a later occasion."

He did not realize that asking a man to take the chair was inserting the thin end of a wedge. "It won't be any trouble to take the chair for So-and-so," the man would think to himself. "I shall have nothing to prepare; and, anyway, I'd like to know what the fellow has to say about——"

When he came he found the debate so lively, the club so eager, the atmosphere so congenial, that he was easily persuaded to come again, this time as lecturer.

Mr. Shaw also told me the debates should not be about purely literary subjects. "That sort of thing is uninteresting," he said. "Why not let these young people discuss some aspect of life?"

He had not grasped the fact that the club was not a league of youth, but had been formed to help writers in their profession. As a matter of fact, Mr. Shaw always sees what he wants to—even if it is not there—and I suspect that your point of view is for him non-existent; and that that is why, yes, and so on and so on. . . . .

If the postcard on that occasion had been one of kind consent, my "No" was nevertheless waiting for me. It came when I asked Mr. Shaw to become a member of an international club for writers. This club was to have a centre in every country, and membership of one centre was to constitute membership of all. In London it was to function by means of a monthly dinner.

"As I am a teetotaller, vegetarian, and non-smoker," said he, overlooking the fact that the main idea was the encouragement of international friendliness, "I do not get much enjoyment out of big dinners."

I suspect he did not believe the club would develop on the lines laid down, for when it showed evidence of having done so, he relented a little.

Last spring the centres in other countries were invited to send delegates to a dinner, a reception, and theatre party. It sounds incredible, but writers came from Scandinavia, Roumania, Spain, America, and nearer lands, in order to take part in this new sort of May Week. The message of goodwill had stirred their imaginations and warmed their hearts. They were entertained at dinner by the leading writers of this country—Thomas Hardy sending a message that "In the exchange of international thought lies the salvation of the world." On the following day the visitors were taken down to Stratford—where Mr. Shaw happened to be staying at the time—to see "A Midsummer Night's Dream" played in Will's own town.

Mr. Shaw agreed to be our guest at the luncheon.

When making the arrangements, buying the sixty-odd theatre tickets, and so on, we had been told there were certain places in the middle of the front row that were already taken. It was a little disconcerting to find that the party could not be all together, that strangers must be seated among us, but it could not be helped.

IT was an amusing expedition. Between sixty and seventy people, many of whom spoke English with difficulty or not at all, went touring through the country on that hot May day. The fruit trees were white with promise, the landscape had that homely beauty which is characteristically English. Green and rich, the plain of central England stretched away on either side of the train. Johan Boyer from Norway, Thor Hedberg from Sweden, Romain Rolland from France, Herman Heijermans from Holland, Louis Pierard from Belgium, and many others sat in the reserved compartments or wandered down the corridors. When the train stopped at Stratford we were told the Mayor would welcome us at Shakespeare's birthplace, and we stravaiged through the town, meeting with merry adventures. The editor of the *English Review*, for instance, was run to earth in a draper's shop by bullocks who did not find him to their liking, and Romain Rolland was seen dreamily walking round a church. His thoughts were evidently far away, and he continued to go round. I think he would have been still walking round that church if Mme. Cruppi had not turned his feet into a straighter path. Stratford is a long, straggling town, and on a hot day it seems ten times as long, red, and straggling as it really is. At length we reached the cottage, cool and dark-browed, where Shakespeare had been born.

Standing just within the door was Bernard Shaw, and everybody behaved as if he were what they had come to see. One person even murmured, "Better a live dog than a dead lion." Our guests were presented to the kindly Mayor, but it was evident that

their longing and their hope was that they should also be presented to the dramatist. As Mr. Shaw dislikes formality, the presentations were reduced to a hearty grasp on his part of every hand that was held out.

At luncheon we put him beside an Italian, with French and Belgians opposite; and while I was interposing to prevent his eyes from being affronted by the corpse of a salmon, I heard him utter this cryptic remark: "You see, the tragedy of my life——"

The salmon, successfully replaced by a little of the nourishment to which Nebuchadnezzar was addicted—in Covent Garden it is called "sparrow-grass"—I begged to be told what was the tragedy of Mr. Shaw's life, but he looked at me warily. I think he is afraid that at some future date I may inveigle him into joining some club or federation which seems to me a necessity.

"I have forgotten," he said hurriedly.

I think it was Signor Cippico who added, "In five minutes Mr. Shaw's tragedy has become a farce."

Later that afternoon I stood at the door of the theatre handing each of our visitors the ticket for his seat. "We have ours," said Mr. and Mrs. Shaw, sweetly, as they passed in. When I followed the last lamb into the fold, there in our midst, in the middle of the front row, were the Shaws, *i.e.*, the strangers whom we had been so much disturbed about when buying the tickets.

The best seats? Well, yes, I fancy Bernard Shaw manages to get the best out of life. Indeed, and why wouldn't he? He deserves it.

H. DE VERE STACPOOLE.

I WAS standing at the door of the biggest room in the Florence Restaurant, telling members of the P.E.N. Club where they were to sit at the monthly dinner, when a giant loomed up in the fairway, and, when I asked his name, admitted in an Irish voice that he was de Vere Stacpoole.

As the history of families interests me, I saw Mr. Stacpoole through a haze of old stark happenings. His forbear, who fought for William of Normandy at Hastings, must have been such another, a doughty man who could lay about him; whom also William, whose representatives were chosen with care, could trust to defend a frontier of his new realm. That early Stacpoole was given land in Pembrokeshire; and when Strongbow, on adventure bent, crossed the Irish Sea, younger sons of the house went with him to brew a red broth in County Cork.

What the Stacpooles could not do was to "stay put," and this last scion of the Irish house was born to wandering parents. To them the countries of Europe were as a suite of rooms, with the sky for thatch, but their son found this continent too tame a dwelling-place. His nature craved the untrodden, the unsailed, and presently off he went in a whaler.

I was going to say he earned his bread by manual labour, but his hands don't look as if he had done anything of the sort. Perhaps he was ship's doctor—I suppose they carry surgeons on a whaler? Well, no matter; at least, his studies in the Latin Quarter finished, he was off.

I wonder where they stowed his superfluity, and how many inches of him hung over the end of his bunk? But perhaps they bought him a special hammock, specially strong and specially long.

No matter for what happened below decks! What you see is the big blond man faring afar—as fared his Viking ancestors in a similar sort of ship—and breathing always the clean air of wild lands and untamable seas.

Like Sinclair Lewis's "Our Mr. Wrenn," the majority of us are travellers by deputy. We have not the hardihood to chance getting a job, any sort of a job; we have not the private income which provides hotels and liners; and yet we long to see the world and the glory thereof. A timid folk, we stretch out eager hands for the books which will satisfy, by pictured story, our cravings.

Mr. Stacpoole, a dim figure amid the trying-out fires, dreamed as he bore a hand with oar and tub, and came home to give us those dreams in "The Blue Lagoon."

He had framed a philosophy, but if a man would get the sophisticated old world to listen to his theories he must make them interesting. Not jam with the pill, but a pill which is jam all through. Mr. Stacpoole seemed to be telling a story of tremendously fascinating adventure; in reality he was saying that mankind suffers from a disease termed civilization, and that the pockmarks of it are visible on the crowding folks of our wide streets. He would depict a saner type of life. Standing at his window in the island where he has elected to live, he looks on the English Channel and watches the great liners go by; or, rather, his blue eyes see past the illusion of ship and sea into the possibilities that life holds for those

who—no doubt with fear in their hearts—go adventuring.

Here is one who still believes that mankind, by taking thought, may add to its stature, and who tries to impress that faith on his generation. "The Blue Lagoon," which appeared about fifteen years ago, set Mr. Stacpoole free to write whatever most appealed to him. He has taken us to Greece, to Iceland, to Kerguelen; but you read his stories for themselves, you do not realize that they are a subtle attempt to persuade you to exchange the miasma of cities for the fresh air of the wilds. He does not think a sequel is ever very satisfactory, and therefore he hesitated long when he found his subconscious mind was suggesting that he should write a continuation of "The Blue Lagoon." This book, "The Garden of God," appeared as a serial, and will presently be published in book form, and Mr. Stacpoole finds he has to write yet another on the same subject. He is busy on it now, and the name—he has a gift for titles—will be "The Gates of Morning." These three books express Mr. Stacpoole's views and are the sum of his experience in story form.

"The Blue Lagoon" is, therefore, the first of a trilogy in which are embodied its author's hopes for humanity.

DE VERE STACPOOLE is practical, as much so when he is considering things that are intangible as when dealing with everyday life. At one time I made a collection of authentic ghost stories, some of which appeared in print. They intrigued my Irish friend, and he said he would tell me one—a good one—when next we met. The time came—it was such a pleasant luncheon!—and I reminded him. He had lately seen Conan Doyle, and for a moment we dallied with the spiritualist's point of view. "I don't find time to do much writing," Sir Arthur had said; "the supernatural grows more and more interesting."

"It is like being in one room and fixing your attention on what is happening in the next," grumbled Mr. Stacpoole. "I want some more Sherlock Holmes stories."

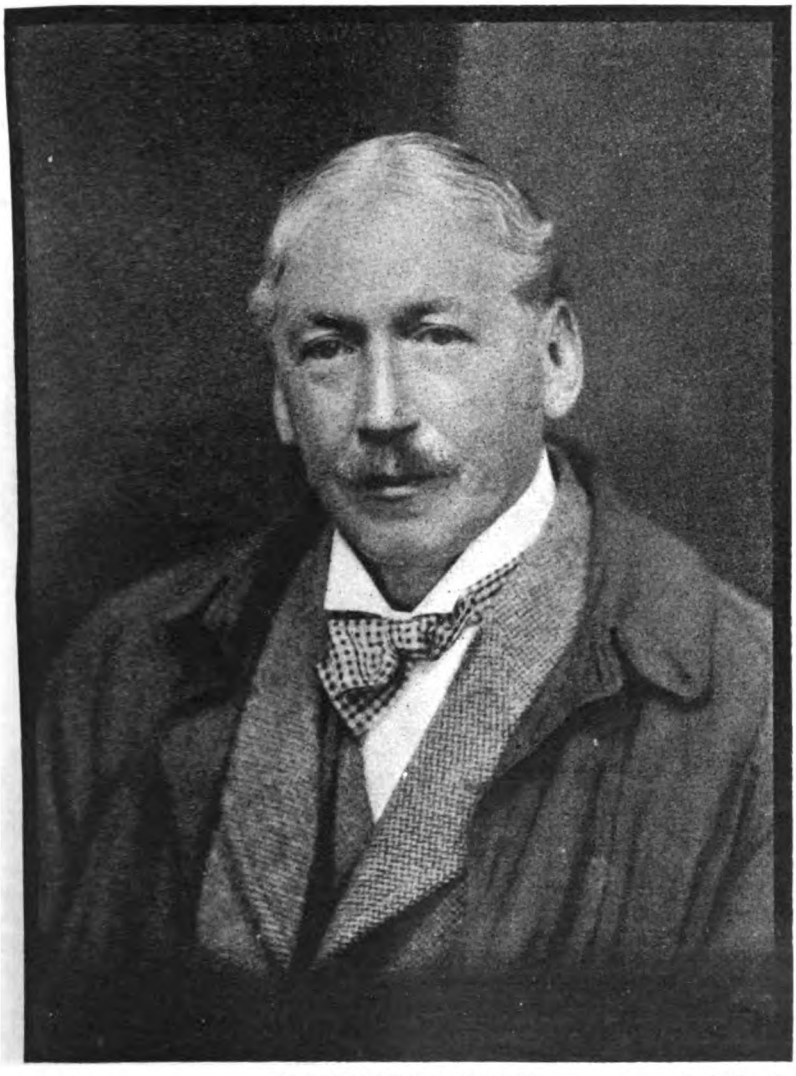
Time enough, he thinks, for Doyle to become interested in the next world when he has finished with this. One at a time.

The promised ghost story was originally told Mr. Stacpoole by Lord W—— when both were living in Essex. It had happened to his father, a man who had no belief in ghosts, who was sensible, shrewd, and commonplace. On one occasion when travelling he was obliged to put up at a country inn for the night. He was given the best bedroom, was, indeed, so comfortably placed that he soon fell asleep. He woke to find the room full of a grey light, and to see, standing by his bed, a skeleton holding in its right hand a long, thin dagger. He naturally imagined that he was going to be attacked. The skeleton raised its hand and flung the dagger—through the wall on the other side of the bed! It then vanished. As I said, Lord W—— was an everyday, courageous man. Although he thought the occurrence strange, he saw no reason to let it spoil his rest. He therefore got up, examined the room to make sure that, except for himself, it was untenanted, then went back to bed and once more fell asleep. In the morning, when his valet aroused him, he saw from the man's face that he had news of some sort that he wished to impart. "Well, Williams, what is it?"

The man told him that during the night the landlord's daughter had been taken suddenly ill and had died. "She died," he said, glancing at the wall through which the dagger had been flung, "in the room next to that of your lordship."

Although Mr. Stacpoole is interested in queer happenings, he does not allow them to take up much of his attention. He was a friend of that witty American, John Oliver Hobbes, who, if you remember, spent the last years of her life in the Isle of Wight. The house in which she died has been taken by strangers who never met her, people who are, not literary. They seem, however, to be psychic, for they have lately been receiving messages in automatic writing which purport to be from her. Mr. Stacpoole, knowing her so well, remembering her turns of thought and expression, is impressed. He recognizes little characteristic touches in the script and sees no reason to doubt the authenticity of the messages. Nevertheless, at the back of his mind is the feeling that she should be too much interested in her new life to concern herself with the old. Because they give us faith in the continuance of life, ghosts, he says, are interesting phenomena. Manifestations are like the bodiless voices that call to us through the telephone. We cannot bid them come across space and play the games of life; but we are glad to know we have their kind remembrance. Once we know it, the interview should end. Presently we shall join them, but there is plenty of time.

Meanwhile interesting and curious things happen, things which teach us that not all inexplicable things are ghostly. The other day Mr. Stacpoole had a letter from the captain of a ship which had been cruising in the latitudes of which he has written in "The Blue Lagoon" and "The Garden of God." His correspondent said that, being in those waters, he had kept a look-



Photo] H. DE VERE STACPOOLE. [E. O. Hoppé.

out for the island. In due course he had found it. He was a little surprised to note how closely the novelist had kept to the actual facts, and he mentioned descriptions in the book which he had taken the trouble to verify. The hut, he said, was exactly where Mr. Stacpoole had said. He had landed and taken a look inside. Though deserted, everything was in good order; in fact, very neat and shipshape. One or two carved coco-nuts were lying about, and one paddle. He enclosed photographs, as he thought Mr. Stacpoole might like to see how little the place had altered since last he was there.

As the island had been purely imaginary—Mr. Stacpoole *did* like to see the photographs of it!

(Mrs. Dawson-Scott's character-studies of famous authors will be continued next month.)

HARRY CHAPPELL.

THE KNIFE

by

PERCEVAL GIBBON

ILLUSTRATED BY H COLLER

THE suave, faintly-smiling doctor, with his look of a man who has been polished and glazed, came forth from the consulting-room to the ante-room, where Chappell waited in solitude.

"Well," said the doctor, with a subdued cheeriness of voice, "I have made an examination, and I think the facts are quite clear. There is undoubtedly a small tumour, and it might become advisable to have it removed. But whoever put it into your wife's head"—Chappell started slightly—"that she had cancer did a very foolish thing. I have advised her regarding a *régime*, and I have given her a prescription. You must see that she doesn't worry. Yes, three guineas—thank you!"

Chappell sat down again, and presently, through the door by which the doctor had departed, Mrs. Mervyn entered. He rose.

"Ready?" he asked.

She came close to him, and caught nervously at the lapel of his coat.

"Harry! What did he tell you?" she asked, breathlessly.

"Hush!" he said, comfortingly. "He took it for granted that I was your husband, to begin with. And he went on to say that whoever let you believe that you had cancer was a fool. The rest was about the same as he must have told you—except that I'm to see that you don't worry. So, you see, it's really all right."

NAN MERVYN.

"But, Harry—Harry!" She shook at his coat in half-hysteric agitation. "The—the operation—what did he say?"

"My dear girl," soothed Chappell, putting his arms about her shoulders, "there's no more question of an operation than there is of cancer. What he *did* say was that he had found a small tumour and that some time or other it might become ad-

Copyright, 1923, by Perceval Gibbon.

GEORGE MERVYN.

visable—not necessary, mind you, but advisable—to remove it. And that's absolutely all."

"Oh!" She leaned against him, within his arms, with a great breath of relief. "I have been so dreading it—all that horrible business with knives and needles—I can't tell you."

"Well, there's nothing for you to dread any more," he said. "Come, now, sweetheart! I'll take you home, and you shall give me some tea. Let's toddle."

He kissed her and released her and held open the door for her to pass out.

The relations between Harry Chappell and George Mervyn's wife were at that stage when only the woman's lingering loyalty to her husband's rights of ownership restrain her from the irrevocable plunge. George Mervyn was a partner in a business founded by his father, a silent man, ten years older than his wife. Chappell, on the other hand, was a rich man's heir, about her own age, and by no means silent. For all his sophistication, there was yet a tincture of boyishness in him; he was sincere and unabashed even in his vices. Tall, well-made, with a fine, high, aquiline face, his path through the world had been an easy one.

SEATED among the chintzes of Nan Mervyn's drawing-room, with the silver kettle singing over its spirit-lamp, Chappell returned to a matter which had much occupied them of late. He had her hand in his, and stroked it and bent and unbent its fingers caressingly while he spoke.

"When are you going to make up your mind, Nan?" he asked. "This can't go on, you know. It's—it's degrading! It'll spoil each of us for the other. We'll have too many memories of furtive meetings and lies and pretences. Why not both of us get out into the open and have done with this hole-and-corner business?"

Nan Mervyn stared at the point of her shoe; for answer she only shook her head.

"But, Nan—we love each other, don't we? There's no doubt about that?"

She replied at last. "No, there's no doubt about that," she said, slowly. "But—I'm afraid, all the same."

"Afraid of what?" he cried. "You have only got to take the first step, Nan. The same day we'd be in Paris; in six months or so we'd be married. And as to being afraid, aren't you more afraid to go on living your life here, unloved, uncherished, uncomforted, when you have only to come with me and in all the rest of your life there will be nothing to be afraid of?"

She nodded, still gazing downwards. "I expect I shall do it some day, Harry," she answered. "I shall have to. You are right about my life here. But at present it's rather like bearing the pain of some disease rather than submit to the knife that would cure it. I wonder if you understand?"

"Perhaps I do, dear," he said, and sighed. "Things been very uncomfortable for you lately?"

"Harry, that's exactly what they are—uncomfortable! George doesn't beat me, of course; he doesn't swear at me, or get drunk, or anything like that. But he hardly ever opens his mouth; when he's at home the house seems to be filled with some oppressive black fog. He brings work home from the office, and from the end of dinner till breakfast-time I never see him. At first I thought he must be in business difficulties, but when I asked him he said there were no difficulties of any kind."

Chappell rose from his chair and joined her on the couch where she sat, and gathered her slender body into his arms.

"Listen!" he said. "How do you think I feel when you tell me these things? I've spoken of myself and of my need for you as little as I could; but I can't stand this. It hurts to think of you brooding through your lonely evenings with Mervyn's personality standing over you like some great bully. It's no use, Nan, darling. You'll have to face the knife and get it over."

"The knife?"

"It was your own metaphor, dear. Kiss me, Nan! Now it's settled, isn't it?"

She struggled feebly to be free, but he held her to him, and presently she submitted and lay still.

"When will you come, Nan?"

"I must think."

"No; no more thinking, darling. I'll do all the thinking for you. Now let's consider ways and means. I'll need to-morrow for arrangements. We'll go the following day."

She continued for a while to protest, to urge a longer delay. But Chappell had her in his arms, his cheek resting upon the silken softness of hers, the fragrance of her hair in his nostrils, and his blood was fire in his veins. For her, too, there was a sensuous gratification in his compulsion; she trusted him; she was sure she loved him. And George Mervyn—never a person to yield excitements—had become very dreary and oppressive of late.

And so, in the end, it was settled. The day after the next she was to leave the house as soon as her husband had departed for his office, and take a cab to Chappell's flat. Thence they would motor to Croydon, where an aeroplane was to be in waiting to fly them to Paris. And she was to leave a note for her husband plainly and simply stating that she had gone away with Chappell and would not return.

When Chappell rose to depart she stood up too, and faced him. Her delicate face had an unwonted flush.

"Harry!" she said suddenly; "I'll face the knife this time."

"You darling!" he cried, and helped himself to farewell kisses.

She sat opposite to her husband at dinner that evening, consciously endeavouring to find some new view-point from which to behold him. He was a man of thirty-seven years old, thick-set, with a heavy and rather expressionless face, and the shadows of middle age were already closing in upon him. He ate his food as though unconscious of what was set before him, and between the courses he sat frowning at the cloth in an utter silence.

"Have you had a tiring day to-day, George?" asked his wife.

He looked up absently. "Eh? I beg your pardon?" She repeated her question. "Oh, no, thanks," he answered, with a kind of nervous haste. "No; not at all."

"Then have you anything to do this evening?"

He frowned more heavily. "Yes," he said. "Work!"

Of himself he volunteered no single remark throughout the meal. She tried to imagine him at dinner when he should have come home and found her note announcing her flight. She could not conceive it. Perhaps it would stir him to miss the woman at the other end of the table, if only as one misses a familiar ornament in a room. And then, brooding, frowning at the cloth, he would forget her as now he forgot her; it should be even easier in her absence than in her presence. It might even be that he would rejoice in the relief of being rid of her.

He opened the door for her when she rose from the table. "Good night," she said as she passed him. "Good night," he responded dully.

BUT her thoughts would not leave him alone. Later in the evening she went down to the little back room behind the dining-room which was set apart as his "den" and opened the door. He was bent above a mass of papers on his desk; he had taken off his coat and rolled up his shirt-sleeves for his work, and she noted his great forearms with the black hair on them. He looked up, scowling a question.

"Are you very busy, George?" she asked.

"Yes!" he replied, curtly.

"It's rather a pity that you should have to give up your evenings to business as well as your days, isn't it?"

He made a grimace of impatience at the interruption. "It's private stuff," he answered. "And I'm in a hurry. Good night!"

She smiled at him, half in amusement, half in derision, and departed.

She breakfasted in bed next morning, arising only after her husband had left the house. She felt curiously disappointed that this, her last day in the home of her married life, aroused no striking emotions in her. She could not even feel sentimental about it. In the middle of the morning she sat down to compose the note for her husband. After several attempts it came out thus:—

"Dear George,—I have gone away from you with my lover, Harry Chappell, and I will shortly send you the evidence necessary to gain your freedom. It has been so clear of late that my presence in your house was burdensome to you that I think you ought to be grateful to me. I hope we shall both be happy in our new lives.—NAN."

She addressed it and locked it away in a drawer of her dressing-table, ready for the letter-box in the morning.

And in the evening, with the letter lying upstairs, like a dagger hidden in a sleeve, she faced her husband at dinner for what was to be the last time. Like the itch to tease which is the vice of some women, she yearned to earmark the evening, to

leave him some memory of it that he should find significant in the light of later events.

"I suppose," she said—he looked up more swiftly than usual—"I suppose I am to have the usual amount of your society this evening, George?"

"No," he said. "If you can come to the 'den' for a little while, I've something to tell you."

"Kiss me, Nan! Now it's settled, isn't it? When will you come?"

"Really?" A thrill of nervousness ran through her. "And why this evening in particular?"

"Because to-morrow evening I shall not have the opportunity," he answered. "I can't talk of it with the servants coming in and out. Leave it till afterwards."

She pushed her plate back and stared at him. What did he know? What did he mean?

"You make me very curious," she said with difficulty.

"It's not for long," he answered. "Er—did you go out to-day?"

She laughed, taking firm hold of her composure. "My dear George," she said, "you're becoming a perfect chatterbox!"

When dinner was over, she did not rise to go upstairs as of wont. "I'll wait for you," she said. "I want to hear this wonderful news of yours. It *is* news, isn't it?"

He rose at once. "Some of it is," he answered. "Come along, then."

He switched on the light in the little room. He was always serious of aspect, and to-night he was serious still, but underlying his gravity was a sort of veiled alacrity. He set forth and unlocked a despatch-case and took therefrom a number of papers. She watched him anxiously.

"I want you first to look at some papers which I will show you," he said. "And after you've seen them and understood them, I'll tell you my news. So if you'll sit here in my chair at the desk, I'll pass them to you one by one."

"What is it all about?" she murmured, taking the seat as she had been told.

"I've drawn these up specially so that they would be clear to you," he said, and laid before her a large sheet with red-ruled money-columns and typed items and figures. "Supposing anything happened to me, this is how you would stand."

He had a pencil in his hand and leaned over her, tapping at the items as he explained them.

"To begin with, this is your money that I invested for you, and I have set it down at the price of the day. And this is the valuation of the cottage in Kent. So you see you are worth, by yourself, exactly seven thousand pounds. Now we come to what you would be worth as a widow."

Patiently, with a quiet lucidity, with explanations that explained and comments that enlightened, he took her down the long list.

"My balance at the bank is rather large just now," he said. "Too large, in fact; but I have recently been realizing some rather speculative investments. To-morrow I want you to come to the bank with me and I will transfer the account to your name."

She leaned back to look up at him in amazement. "But why?" she gasped.

"And to-morrow! I—I couldn't come to-morrow."

"It must be to-morrow, I'm afraid," he said, quietly. "And I'll tell you why presently. So you see that you won't be badly off—if anything should happen some day. And this"—he took up another document—"is my will. I executed it at my solicitors' to-day. I can tell you what it contains. It leaves you everything. That's all. These are my insurance policies."

She sprang up. "George!" she almost screamed, "you aren't going to commit suicide?"

"Don't be silly," he said, sharply. "Now I'm going to put all these papers in the safe and hand you the key. Then I'll tell you the news."

She watched, fascinated by the deliberate method of his movements as he opened the safe and arranged the documents on the shelves within. She took the key which he proffered her dumbly. She was aware that something was impending—something that terrified her from afar.

GEORGE MERVYN took an armchair some ten feet from her, crossed his knees, leaned back, and smiled.

"Well, Nan," he said, "I've tried to save you from worrying, but I don't know that I've succeeded very well. The truth is—I've got to undergo rather a serious operation, and I've had a good deal of pain lately. That's why I worked at nights to get my affairs in order, in case they should suddenly become *your* affairs."

She was staring at him; her face had gone deadly pale. "An operation!" she repeated. "The knife!" she added, involuntarily.

He smiled a little wryly. "Don't!" he said. "I've been dreaming of knives lately."

"But what is it?" she asked, shuddering. She, too, had dreamed of knives. "What is the matter with you?"

"Don't be frightened," he warned her, but she leaped to her feet with a strange shrill cry.

"I know! I know!" she babbled. "I know what it is—it's cancer!" And as he nodded gravely she held up passionately-clasped hands.

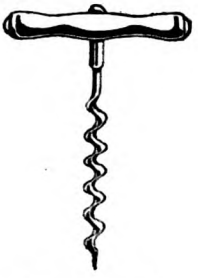
"Thank God! thank God!" she cried. And ere he could start upright in a horror of surprise she was at his feet, her head upon his knees, sobbing in an utter abandon.

"George—George, I won't leave you; I won't leave you; I'll never leave you! You should have told me. I could have borne it with you. George, George—don't be afraid of the knife! Don't be afraid, dear!"

"George!" she almost screamed, "you aren't going to commit suicide?"

"Why, Nan, girl!" He raised her and drew her to his lap, and held her close. "I'm not afraid of anything that gives me my wife like this. It's worth it, whatever happens!"

The Mervyns ran across Harry Chappell in Paris, when they were on their way to convalesce at Nice. Mervyn asked him to dinner; but he had another engagement and was unable to come.



IT ALL TAKES TIME

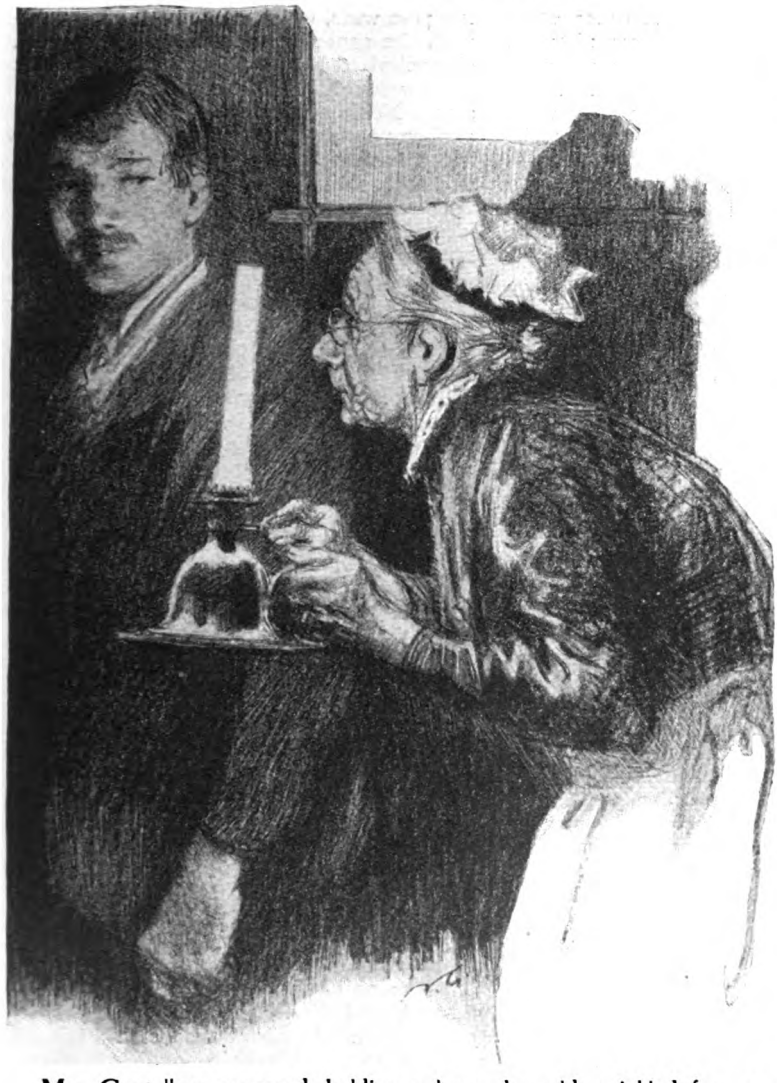
by

STACY AUMONIER

ILLUSTRATED BY FRANK GILLETT R.I.

JOHNNY CANTALLOW was a young man who lived up to the theory that anything that's worth doing at all is worth doing slowly. It is a gardener's secret. Gardeners have discovered a degree of progression that makes plumbers appear to move like greyhounds. Of all the gardeners around the countryside bordering on the market town of Tibbelsford, Johnny Cantallow was the slowest and most deliberate. By which you must please understand that he was not lazy. He would be at work in Mr. Braun's nurseries at half-past six in the morning, and, except for a break of one hour for his midday dinner, he would work stolidly and deliberately until five o'clock in the afternoon. His pace never varied. He would dig, plant, clip, and lop with an identical rhythm, as though he were being perpetuated in bronze. Such things as fatigue, backache, or boredom were unknown to him. If you observed his movements as he commenced to turn over the soil of an acre of land that was to be planted with potatoes, you felt that the work in hand could never be accomplished. Next

Copyright, 1923, by Stacy Aumonier.



Mrs. Cantallow appeared, holding a lamp, her old, wrinkled face as perplexed and bewildered as her son's.
"Eh? Him wants a what?"
"A corkscrew."

season's crop would be overdue before he had dug up half his adventure. If you commented upon it to him, he would survey the field complacently with his ingenuous grey eyes and remark: "Aye, it all takes time." And then, to your surprise, if you went there a few days later you would find it all finished! When you addressed him, between your remark and his reply there would always be an interval of at least a minute. Any remark was like a shock that had to enter his system and be dispersed. He would screw up his mouth and blow out his cheeks, look at you pensively, and then turn away and ponder. Even the simplest remark would get him like that. If you said, "A fine day, Johnny!" he wasn't going to be bustled into agreeing with you. Was it really a fine day? What kind of day? Was a north wind fine for young cabbage shoots? What was your motive in remarking about it at all? He would lean on his spade and cogitate.

On the other hand, having made up his mind about a thing, nothing would shift his conviction. His reply seemed very important to him. He was incapable of evasion, subterfuge, or pretence. He was grimly tenacious.

He lived with his mother, who was stone-deaf, in a tiny cottage at Hannay, which, as you know, is a village two miles due south of Tibbelsford town. To see him riding his solid-tyre bicycle from the cottage to Braun's nurseries you would think he was entering for one of those races where you have to see how slowly you can go without falling off. Nevertheless, during the three years he had been working for Mr. Braun, that gentleman acknowledged that he had never known Johnny to be five minutes late. Neither did he ever go sick or have a holiday, except Christmas Day and Good Friday.

The village of Hannay was the result of the social thrust caused by a highly successful film factory on the outskirts of Tibbelsford. The ancient tumbledown cottages were

sandwiched in with prosperous modern villas that boasted bathrooms and greenhouses. At one of the latter had lately come to reside a young married couple, a Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Still. Mr. Still was a clerk in the film factory, and his wife was a girl whose social manner expressed oh-what-a-rag-it-all-is! Everything was "frightfully hectic," and she wore bangles and a wrist watch. She had been a typist, and the thrill of her elevation was still upon her. Mr. Still was enormously proud of her. Down at the factory he spoke casually of "the wife" and of "dining at home." They had napkins and toast-racks, a portable bookcase, a gramophone, some reproductions of paintings by Alma-Tadema and Luke Fildes, a complete suite of new oak dining-room furniture with hearts perforated in all available spaces, a brass bed, a water-colour of Lake Lucerne painted by a cousin on a Polytechnic trip, an embroidered tea-cosy, and a bath-mat. Altogether they were people of some social significance. Their villa was barely twenty paces from the old thatched cottage where Johnny Cantallow and his mother lived. The propinquity gave an added thrill to the united social consciousness of Mr. and Mrs. Still. The dilapidated appearance of the cottage made their own home seem even more palatial. Moreover, although consciously superior, they were not above speaking to the cottagers. "We mustn't be snobs," Bernard had said. And Mrs. Still thought it was a perfect scream to call on Mrs. Cantallow and take her some hot gruel or a home-made cake. It was the high-water mark of social distinction to have cottagers to patronize. The slowness of Johnny was a subject of constant mirth to the happy pair. "I should like to see him in the factory," said Bernard. "He wouldn't half get it in the neck from our Mr. Williams, the American sales manager! Oh, dear!" and Bernard laughed until the tears streamed down his cheeks.

BUT no incident concerning Johnny ever created such mirth as the historic one of borrowing a corkscrew. Mr. and Mrs. Still screamed over it for weeks, laughed over it for years, and probably till the end of their days will never be able to tell the story coherently. Mr. Still had had an unexpected rise of salary—an extra ten shillings a week—the rise to date back three weeks. Consequently he arrived home one Saturday afternoon with elation in his heart and unaccustomed wealth in his pocket. Also he brought with him a bottle of port wine, cunningly packed up so that it might be either a tin of biscuits, a telescope, or a thermos flask. Not that there was anything against drinking port wine, but it wasn't quite in keeping with the general atmosphere of tone which characterized Homelands, Hannay, to arrive there with a bottle tucked under one's arm. Neither was it quite the thing to be exuberant about the rise in fortune. It was better form to accept it as a matter of course, and to break the news to "the wife" in a nonchalant fashion. He did not even identify the bottle with his increased salary. He just said, casually:—

"By the way, I brought home a bottle of port. I thought it might be rather nice to have a glass this evening."

And Mrs. Still was perfectly correct in her manner of accepting the fact. She said:—

"Oh, you naughty boy! Not half extrav., are you?"

It was all splendidly done. In the afternoon they went for a walk. Mr. Still talked about some of the men at the All-in Film Factory, also about himself, his prospects, his popularity with the other members of the staff, about the case of the upholsterer who had just murdered his wife at Walham Green, and the chances of Tibbelsford in the local league competition. Mrs. Still talked about her married sister's children, about what she meant to do with the curtains in the spare bedroom, what they were saying about that Mrs. Uphill at the Chestnuts, about the niceness of the vicar's wife, and what a scream the people were at the Welfare meeting. Also she called at a local draper's and bought some white wool. (She was making some mysterious clothing that Mr. Still was too fastidious to inquire about in detail.) Everything was entirely pleasant and satis factory. Then they went home to tea. After tea Mr. Still smoked a pipe and read *Tit-Bits* and the *Film Trade Bi-monthly Record*, and Mrs. Still got busy with the white wool. At about six o'clock Mr. Still became aware of a slight condition of boredom. He had read *Tit-Bits* all through, and affairs in the film trade had ceased to produce a thrill. He suddenly remembered the bottle of port. He said, casually:—

"What do you say to a glass of port, dear?"

And Mrs. Still, without any particular enthusiasm, declared that she thought that the indulgence would be very nace.

Mr. Still took the bottle of port into the kitchen to open it. And then, of course, he could not find the corkscrew. They knew they had a corkscrew, because Mrs. Still's young brother had given them one for a wedding present. They both searched in vain. One of the chars, who occasionally came in to do half a day's work, must have taken it. It was very provoking. It was not so much that it mattered about the

corkscrew, as Mrs. Still explained, but it meant that if that sort of person takes a corkscrew, goodness knows what else they may have taken. And she glanced apprehensively at the silver butter-dishes and the toast-rack.

Now the question arose as to how immediately important the corkscrew was. Of course, it would be nice to have a glass of port wine, but, on the other hand, it seemed a little *infra dig.* to be insistent about it. One could, of course, borrow one from a neighbour, but unless you knew the neighbour very well, it might seem a little queer, suspicious. There were only two neighbours that they knew very well—the Bowers, who lived next door, and the Greenaways, at Mon Repos. Unfortunately the Bowers were away, up in London, and their villa was shut up. Mr. Still volunteered to go across to Mon Repos. It was a very dark evening in November, and he found that old Mr. Greenaway was out. Mrs. Greenaway and her daughter set to work to find a corkscrew, but, curiously enough, their corkscrew also appeared to be missing. After repeating about seventeen times, "Oh, please don't bother. It doesn't matter at all," Mr. Still returned home. At least, he was returning home when his eye caught the light in the Cantallows' cottage. "Those kind of people always have a corkscrew," he deliberated. He tapped on the door, and Johnny opened it.

"Good evening," whooped Mr. Still, cheerily. "Do you happen to have such a thing as a corkscrew?"

Johnny stared at him solemnly whilst the request sank in. A corkscrew, eh? He scratched his head and coughed. Mrs. Cantallow rumbled in the background:—

"Who is that? Who is it, Johnny?"

"It's a—it's Mr. Still, mither. He says, has we a corkscrew?"

Mrs. Cantallow appeared, holding a lamp aloft, her old, wrinkled face as perplexed and bewildered as her son's.

"Eh? Him wants a what?"

"A corkscrew."

"A corkscrew!"

She set the lamp down, and looked meditatively at her son.

"Us did have a corkscrew. When yer Uncle Jarvis was nigh—it must be two years since. Look in the basket on the b'iler, Johnny."

Johnny proceeded to look in the basket on the b'iler, whilst his mother and Mr. Still mutually agreed that the night was dark and cold, and that the weather experienced at Hannay in the winter was not all that one could desire. Of course, Johnny couldn't find the corkscrew, and his mother joined in the search. The kitchen and the larder and the sitting-room were ransacked to the accompaniment of Mr. Still's "Please don't bother. It doesn't matter at all," and Mrs. Cantallow's "I know us has a corkscrew somewheres. When yer Uncle Jarvis was nigh——"

The search lasted nearly a quarter of an hour, and proved fruitless. It gave Johnny time, however, to indulge in some profound thinking, and his thoughts ran somewhat on these lines: A corkscrew! What did Mr. Still want a corkscrew for? To draw a cork, perhaps. What kind of cork? A cork from a bottle, of course. What kind of bottle? What would the bottle contain? A bottle of beer, perhaps, or rum, or porty wine. Folks didn't borrow a corkscrew to draw the cork out of a bottle of scent. It must be a bottle of something more moving and important. Now, Johnny by all standards was practically a teetotaller; nevertheless, he was never averse to a glass of something when it came his way. He was a teetotaller more for economic reasons than moral ones. His mother had a tiny annuity, but the upkeep of the cottage depended largely on his small salary. He could not afford to indulge in these luxuries. Nevertheless, a glass of beer now and then, or a drop of porty wine, well! It was Saturday night, cold and dark, and several hours to bedtime. Just as Mr. Still was going, he said:—

"I think p'r'aps I could get hold of one for 'ee."

Mr. Still said: "Oh, no, no, don't bother. It doesn't matter at all." But on returning to the villa he reported the affair to his wife, who screamed with laughter.

"What are you laughing at, my dear?" he asked.

"Oh, I was only wondering how long it will take him to get it. He'll probably walk into Tibbelsford, and get back when we're in bed."

It created quite a pleasant diversion, speculating on the chances of Johnny getting the corkscrew, and, if so, how long it would take him.

IT was then half-past six, and Mrs. Still showed great acumen in her discernments concerning Johnny, for it was exactly a quarter to eleven, just as Mr. Still was putting the chain on the door, that their neighbour came lumbering through the gate. He tapped on the door, and when Mr. Still opened it, he said in a matter-of-fact voice:—

"I've got that there corkscrew for 'ee."

Mr. Still gasped.

"Oh, dear! I'm afraid you've had a lot of bother."

"Oo—naw. It all takes time."

Mrs. Still, who had gone up some time ago, nearly fell out of bed with laughter when she heard. And as far as she and her husband were concerned that was the end of the story.

But for purposes of our own let us trace the movements of Johnny Cantallow from the time he left his cottage at half-past six until he returned with the corkscrew at ten-forty-five, when in the surprise of his return Mr. Still even forgot to offer him a glass of porty wine!

A corkscrew! Now who would have a corkscrew? The Cantallows were not particularly intimate with their neighbours. Mrs. Cantallow was a woman who believed in keeping herself to herself, and Johnny was as slow at forming friendships as he was at everything else. Moreover, as likely as not the local cottagers would not have a corkscrew. But there was one gigantic figure who immediately presented himself to Johnny's imagination—Mr. Selden Wright, the landlord of the Love-a-Duck, the largest inn at Tibbelsford.

Mr. Selden Wright would have hundreds of corkscrews, and Johnny knew him well. He had often worked for Mr. Selden Wright, who was very friendly to him, and very generous. A four-mile walk there and back would be a pleasant way to while away the evening. He had nothing else to do, and, although the night was dark and cold, it was fine and bracing.

He lighted his pipe, took a stout hazel stick, and set forth. With hunched shoulders and shagging knees he trundled along the high road. The villas and cottages and parish school of Hannay were soon left behind. Johnny swung his stick and blew out little clouds of sweet-scented shag. He was entirely happy. The simplicity of his mission enthralled him. He detested anything complicated or that evoked the problem of having to make up his mind. He had merely to stroll over to the Love-a-Duck, enter the bar, touch his hat to Mr. Selden Wright, and say:—

"Evenin', Mr. Wright. Might you be so kind as to lend I a corkscrew?"

And Mr. Wright would probably say something cheery and funny, but he would most certainly lend him the corkscrew. He would then thank him, touch his hat, and stroll back. He would tap on Mr. Still's door, and Mr. and Mrs. Still would say it was very kind of him, and would offer him a glass of something. He would then return home, have a final pipe, and go to bed. Half a mile farther on he passed the square, ugly blocks of the All-in Film Company. He observed languidly that there was a dim light in that portion of the building where the managerial offices were, and also in one of the top rooms. The lodge, the headquarters of the night-watchman, appeared to be in darkness. He knew Joe Lambarde, the night-watchman, very well, and if he had been in his lodge he would probably have looked in for a minute to pass the time of night, but as the lodge was in darkness he merely thought to himself: "Joe's on his rounds," and passed on.

HE kept to the middle of the road, and until he reached the outskirts of Tibbelsford he passed perhaps half-a-dozen people, who all exchanged with him that greeting of "Good night" which is partly a challenge and partly a courtesy on the countryside on a dark night. Tibbelsford appeared quite gay, with many shops still open and stalls where people were selling linoleum, stockings, lace curtains, whelks, and vegetables. He ambled up the High Street, bought half an ounce of shag, and then made his way to the top of the hill and the capacious premises of the Love-a-Duck.

The familiar figure of Mr. Selden Wright, leaning over the bar and shaking a fat admonitory finger at some old crony, cheered his sight. He waited, grinning, to catch the landlord's eye. The latter was laying down the law about the right way to handle steers on a cattle boat. He settled the matter, and flicked up a little pool of moisture with a duster. Then his eye caught Johnny's. In his large booming voice, but without any change of facial expression, he cried out:—

"Well, well, well, well, well. Miss Carter, bring a tankard of bitter for my friend Johnny Cantallow."

Johnny was almost overcome by the unexpected gift. He gabbled something incoherent about not wanting any such thing, not having come for it.

When he had taken a deep draught, he turned to the landlord and said:—

"Excuse me, Mr. Wright, what I comes over for is, sir, have you such a thing as a corkscrew I could borrow the loan of?"

The landlord looked up at the ceiling as though beseeching the powers above.

"Have we a corkscrew! Have we a corkscrew in the Love-a-Duck! Miss Carter, we haven't got a corkscrew, have we? Dear me, what should we want a corkscrew for in a place like this? Didn't you try at the post-office?"

Oh, he was a most amusing man, the landlord!

When the corkscrew was brought, he exclaimed:—

"Johnny, what is this secret drinking all about? Does your mother know you're out?"

This seemed to impress him as a happy

When he had taken a deep draught, he turned to the landlord and said: "Excuse me, Mr. Wright, have you such a thing as a corkscrew I could borrow the loan of?"

piece of spontaneous verse, for he sang it and elaborated it. The landlord was in one of his most genial moods. Johnny found it difficult to escape. The good ale and the landlord's high spirits warmed the cockles of his heart. He thrust back the temptation to stay on. "Too bad to keep they folks waitin' too long," he thought.

Once more upon the road he hummed in his throat queer noises intended to indicate elation and contentment. He left Tibbelsford reluctantly behind. It was then nearly half-past eight. He had stayed at the Love-a-Duck much longer than he had intended. His journey back was entirely uneventful until he came once more to the film factory. He was about to pass it when—a little encouraged by the pint of ale and the landlord's cheery talk—he felt a sudden further desire for social intercourse. He would have a few words with Joe Lambarde before returning home. He looked at the buildings critically, and into his slow intelligence there crept a curious sense of misgiving. In the first place, the lodge was still in darkness, and there was still a light in one of the top rooms, and a dimmer one in the manager's office, just as there had been an hour and a half ago. This in itself was queer. Joe usually spent the evening in the lodge. He made two rounds, one about eleven-thirty and the other about three o'clock in the morning. Working at night in the film factory was unknown. There was too much inflammable and dangerous material about. Moreover, when Joe did his rounds, he always left the lodge lighted up. And then, as Johnny peered at it, he was not certain whether there was not a light in it after all. Anyway, it was the easiest thing in the world to find out. On the barred iron gates was an electric bell-push which rang a bell in the lodge. He pressed it three times.

There was no answer or sign of any sort. He muttered: "Oh, well," and went on his way. But when he had gone a hundred yards or so his conscience began to nag him a little. "Yes, but supposing—— It wasn't my business, but still——" Very slowly he retraced his steps. He stood at the gate, called out, and rang again. There was still no answer. Should he warn someone? Go back and inform the police? But what a fool he would look if it was all quite simply explained. He stood there for a long time pondering. No one passed. Then he thought: "I think I'd just like to have a peep into that lodge."

THERE was only one way to do it—to climb the iron gates. He knew that the high brick walls on either side were topped with broken bottles. The gates were nearly ten feet high, and to climb them in the dark was a perilous performance. Nevertheless, he managed to land safely on his feet on the gravel path the other side. He crept stealthily up to the lodge and opened the door. His second impression was right. There was a light in there. It was a small lantern placed on the ground. He picked it up and glanced round the room. Something caught his eye which caused him to exclaim, "My God!" On the floor was the body of a man, gagged and bound. It was Joe Lambarde. The room reeked of chloroform.

Some people would have been amazed if they had observed the quickness of Johnny's next actions. Joe was unbound and the gag removed in less than two minutes. But his release was momentarily valueless. The man was unconscious. The effect of the chloroform would probably not wear off for hours. In the meantime Johnny carried the victim into an inner room and laid him on a bed. He sprinkled water on his face, placed a pitcher by his side, and left him. Then he went out again into the darkness.

Johnny had served through three and a half years of the war in a line regiment. He had lain out in no-man's land with star-shells bursting above him and a thousand eyes watching him. During those years he had distinguished himself in no way at all—except by a kind of obstinate courage, a tenacious persistence in sticking to orders, a queer muffled obedience to what he believed to be his duty. He stood there blinking at the lights in the factory. "If I go back to Tibbelsford and tell the police it will be too late," something told him. It was his duty to go across no-man's land and find out what was what. There were probably burglars robbing the factory safe. He walked stealthily up to the main buildings. The managerial and clerical offices were in a kind of annexe, separated from the main fabric by a concrete passage. When he arrived there he realized that his hob-nailed boots would make too much clatter on this surface, so he commenced by removing his boots. He did a tour of the annexe, holding his boots under one arm and gripping his stick with the other. On the farther side, almost concealed by a thick clump of bushes, was a small car. One rear-light was alight; the rest in darkness. Its nose pointed to a narrow sanded path that led out on to Moffat's Lane. Anyone going that way would avoid the high road, and within a few minutes could be well out of the vicinity, bearing east towards London.

"There's someone here up to no good," he said to himself.

He made a careful survey of the position

of the room where the light was, and then he crept along the wall and tried the door. It was unlocked. His remarkable genius for slowness enabled him to turn the handle noiselessly. He put his boots down outside and slipped into the entrance hall and shut the door with equal silence.

He had no plans formed in his mind, only a stolid determination to see "what was what." He made his way along the passage until he saw a light under one of the doors on the left. He knelt down and listened. He could hear the rumble of two men's voices. He listened some time, and it was aggravating not to hear what was said. He had been shown over the film factory on several occasions by Joe, and he knew that this was the manager's office. After mature reflection he remembered that the room next door was a clerk's office which was connected with this room by a green baize door. It seemed a perilous undertaking to penetrate that outer office, but still—there it was. It had to be done. He returned to the outer door, and entered apparently unheard, for the men were still talking. He groped his way carefully to the green baize door. He placed his hand on the brass studs, and worked it open a quarter of an inch, sufficient to hear but not to see or be seen. The first thing he heard was the clink of glass. They were drinking.

The next thing he heard was an exclamation: "My God!"

One of them must have seen the door move. Johnny gripped his stick and waited.

The other man said: "What is it? What's the matter?"

"I believe I left the light on in room F."

There was a growl of "Fool!" and the sound of footsteps coming towards the door, and then the same voice said:—

"Never mind! Sit down. What does it matter? We'll clear the whole place up in half an hour."

The first man was apparently in a state of nervous dread. He almost whimpered:—

"God! I'm getting the wind up, Sir Alfred."

Sir Alfred! Johnny tried to solve in his mind who Sir Alfred might be. Sir Alfred what? The manager's name was Vaughan-Escott, and neither of these men's voices sounded like his. The older man, known as Sir Alfred, said:—

"Come on. Pull yourself together. Have another tot of whisky. The whole thing is as easy as winking. There's nothing to worry about."

"But suppose somebody sees that light and thinks they'll come in and investigate?"

"Somebody? Who, I'd like to know? How are they going to get in? Vaughan-Escott's up in London. All these village idiots are in bed, or are too lazy or silly to take any interest."

Then he chuckled and added:—

"The night-watchman is having a nice snooze!"

"That's one of the things I dread, Sir Alfred. Suppose—suppose—he dies, for instance—and they cop us! It means——"

The older voice came savagely:—

"Look here, Wright, you've got to pull yourself together. The thing's too big. As you know, this is my only chance, and I'm not going to stand any damned nonsense about it. All these bills fall due on December the third. With my share of the insurance I can not only meet them, but be set up comfortably for some time. Listen. I promised you a thousand. If you'll behave yourself, and not go on like an hysterical schoolgirl, I'll make it two. We've got the place all nicely rigged out, and it's too late to turn back."

JOHNNY'S slow-moving mind began to realize the diabolical intentions of this conspirator and his weak accomplice. They were going to fire the factory. Sir Alfred was apparently one of the big shareholders. Well! He had often heard of the terrors and fear of such a fire. When the flames once reached those celluloid sheets the whole thing goes up almost like an explosion. It would be gutted in half an hour. What then? True, there was no one in the factory. Joe away out in the lodge might escape, if they hadn't overdosed him. On the other hand—the film factory! Johnny remembered it being built. It was one of the prides of the countryside, a fantastic and amazing spectacle, employing four hundred and fifty people. Think of that! Four hundred and fifty people. This was Saturday night. On Monday, or rather to-morrow, they would find that they were all out of work. Many of them his friends—old Joe, the Crossbys, Sam Wilde, his neighbours the Stills. He didn't set any particular store by the Stills, and yet there they were, a pleasant enough young couple, just married and hopeful for the future, very kind to his mother, and—why, yes, he had a corkscrew in his pocket for them. They were probably waiting now to open that bottle of porty wine. Somehow or other this thing must be stopped.

He must not be too precipitate; just as well to take time to think. While they were in this office the factory was safe. Think, think. . . . Johnny racked his brains. He prayed for subtlety, but the only idea that occurred to him was to rush into the office and attack the two men with his stick. He would have had no qualms over this offensive, if he were assured that they were

not armed. A desperate villain like Sir Alfred would almost assuredly carry a revolver. He stood at that door for nearly twenty minutes, listening to Sir Alfred coaxing and bullying the other man. Fortified by several more tots of whisky, the weaker vessel was giving way. It was just at that point that a rough plan of sorts formed in Johnny's brain. He crept back the way he had come and went out of the door of the annexe. They too would have to come that way. He carefully replaced his boots. The little car was barely ten paces from the door. He went up to it, drew a jack-knife, and plunged it into one of the rear tyres. The tyre went off with a bang. He then stood up with his back to the bushes. The result was as he had anticipated. In less than a minute the door was gingerly opened. Two figures crept out. He heard one whisper :—

"Who is it? What is it?"

And the other :—

"It's only a damned tyre burst. Of course it would happen——"

And then Johnny bawled out :—

"Hands up, both of 'ee. I got 'ee covered with my rifle!"

And he held up his ash stick, with the "butt" on his shoulder and the "barrel" covering the two men. In the darkness the illusion was sufficient. The younger man screamed and was about to dash away when Johnny called out :—

"If either of 'ee runs I fire. Hands up!"

It was apparent that even Sir Alfred was frightened. He put up his hands and began to bluster :—

"You shall hear more of this, my man!" "Yes," And with that he gave the dishonest director

"Look here, my good man——"

Johnny pulled him up short with :—

"Single file—to the front gate—march!"

Whilst going down the concrete passage and crossing the yard to the lodge, Johnny was racking his brains as to how to get the

key of the iron gate, if Joe was still unconscious. He was not vengeful. He just wanted to get these two men well off the premises and locked out, so that they shouldn't fire the factory. But if they went into the light of the lodge, and saw that his rifle was only an ash stick, and if Sir Alfred really had a revolver—— But ah! how simple! Within three yards of the lodge door he cried: "Halt!"

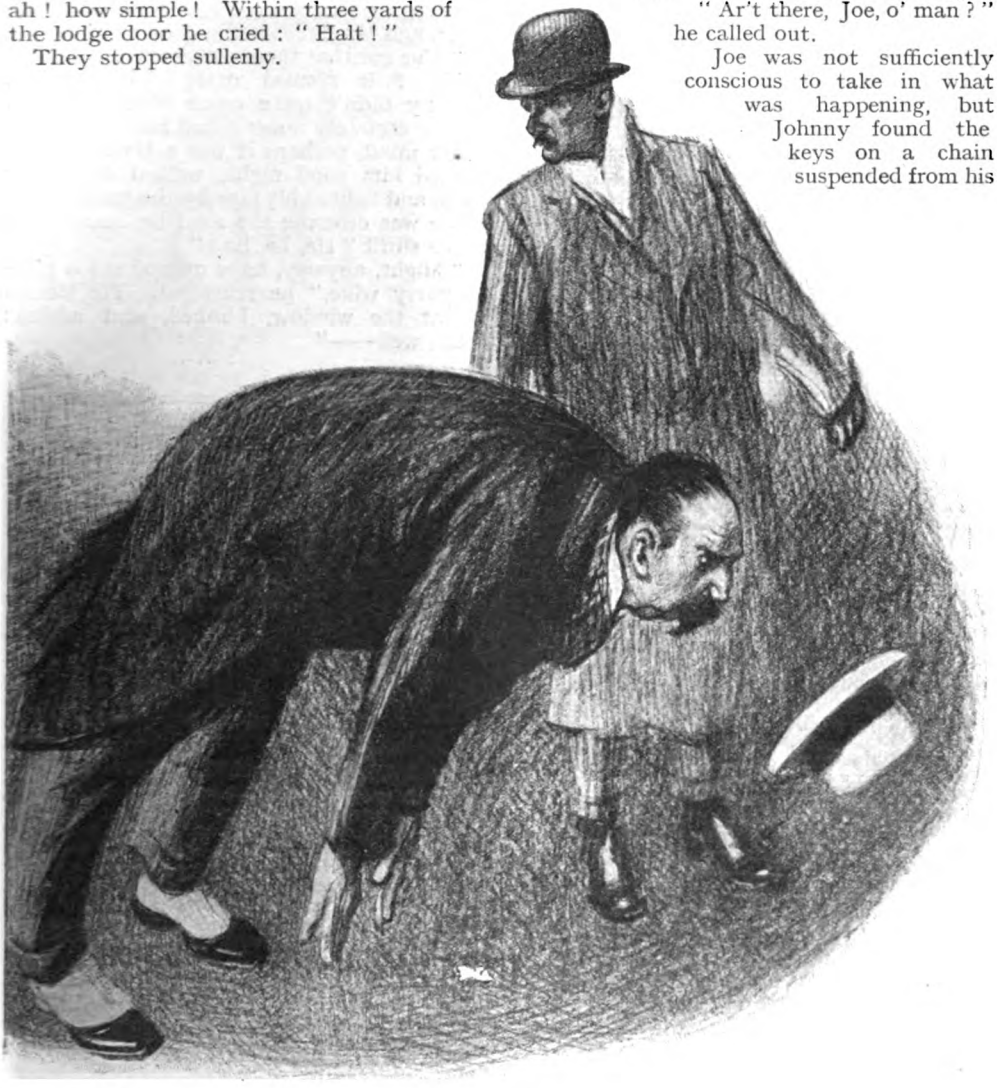
They stopped sullenly.

"Now come on!" he said.

The other man he did not bother about. Even if he had a revolver he knew that he would not have the nerve to use it. He conducted them both into the living-room of the lodge. He heard Joe groaning feebly. He picked up the lantern in his left hand and held the revolver in his right.

"Ar't there, Joe, o' man?" he called out.

Joe was not sufficiently conscious to take in what was happening, but Johnny found the keys on a chain suspended from his



answered Johnny. "And you shall feel more of it!"
a mighty kick with his hobnailed boot.

"Keep arms well up. I'm goin' to see if 'ee have a gun."

He searched Sir Alfred from behind, and found a revolver in his hip-pocket. He took possession of it and threw his ash stick down.

braces. He took them off and led his two prisoners out to the iron gate. They were both dazed and terrified. When he opened the gate they seemed unable to realize that they were being released. The anticipation of freedom made them a little more bellicose.

Sir Alfred wanted to go back for the car. By the light of the lantern, Johnny could see that he was a fat, oleaginous individual, with a heavy black moustache. When Johnny refused to let them go back for the car he became abusive. Outside the gate he said :—

" You shall hear more of this, my man ! "

" Yes," answered Johnny. " And you shall *feel* more of it ! "

And with that he gave the dishonest director a mighty kick up behind with his hobnailed boot, and knocked him flat over in the road. He then quietly shut the gate and locked it. He had lost interest in Sir Alfred and his friend.

He found Joe conscious but still very dazed. After doing what he could for him for some time, he went along the road to a cottage where Joe's sister and her husband lived. They came back with him, and he left Joe in their care.

Having completed everything to his satisfaction, he walked slowly back to Hannay.

There was a light up in the Stills' bedroom. " Gone to bed," he reflected, shrewdly.

However, he had promised to deliver the corkscrew, and deliver it he would. Just as he tapped on the door he heard someone putting up the chain. The chain was undone, and Mr. Still stood gaping at him.

" I've got that there corkscrew for 'ee."

Mr. Still seemed quite flabbergasted. Johnny didn't quite catch what he said, but he certainly never asked him in. Well, never mind, perhaps it was a bit late. He wished him good night, walked down the path, and lighted his pipe by the gate. Just as he was crossing the road he heard Mrs. Still's shrill " He, he, he ! "

" Might, anyway, have offered me a glass of porty wine," he muttered. He looked up at the window, blinked, and added : " Oh, well——"

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 123.

(*The Third of the Series.*)

To philosophic optimists is known
What 'tis that clouds, without exception, own.

1. Theatrical, where goods are bought and sold,
   An animal it frequently will hold.
2. These letters four must first in code appear,
   And signs of correspondence will be here.
3. We live and learn, and in the summer time
   Most of us have the subject of our rhyme.
4. Loveliness said that she would not be seen,
   Might then decided on another queen.
5. Look to the rising sun, and you will find
   By far the greatest part of it behind.
6. A burning question. Rearrange it, he
   Does manual work with great dexterity. PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 123 *should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor,* THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on October* 10*th.*

To every light one alternative answer may be sent ; it should be written at the side. At the foot of his answer every solver should write his pseudonym and nothing else.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 122.

(*The Second of the Series.*)

THEY rhyme : inserted in a gun,
Two, with good aim, will slaughter *one*.

1. A sudden fright a crowd will seize.
2. Republic in the Pyrenees.
3. Machine most grateful in the heat.
4. By nature sour, by art made sweet.
5. A wandering pirate on the main.
6. Ancient inhabitants of Spain.
7. One out of place in learning's halls.
8. From labour to refreshment calls.
9. A synonym for captivate
   Is written oft on door or gate.

KING COLE.

1.	P	ani	C
2.	A	ndorr	A
3.	R	efrigerato	R
4.	T	ar	T
5.	R	ove	R
6.	I	ber	I
7.	D	ullar	D
8.	G	on	G
9.	E	ntrano	E

TWENTY-THIRD SERIES : RESULT.

Though every light was answered by several solvers, only two competitors solved the whole series with entire correctness : these two, Dun and Ubique, gain prizes of £2 7s. 3d. each. Sixteen others missed one point only : one of them, Zenas, gave no hint of name or address ; Arden, Crassus, Enos, Forest, Franz, Manora, Peci, Reg, Silex, Sivart, Slugo, Splosh, Vinjo, Yoko, and Zyme take half a guinea each. Dun and Ubique must now be debarred from success in the current (twenty-fourth) series.

The seventeen winners are : Dun, Mr. D. Graham Robertson, Torrie, St. John's Road, Newbury, Berks ; Ubique, Major Luard, 14, Woodlane, Falmouth ; Arden, Mr. R. W. Bates, R.N. College, Dartmouth ; Crassus, Mr. J. F. Stout, 36, St. Barnabas Road, Cambridge ; Enos, Mr. W. S. Cool, 10, Whitehall Place, S.W.1 ; Forest, Mr. P. E. Herrick, 40, Arodene Road, S.W.2 ; Franz, Lady Young, Lerryn, Weybridge ; Manora, Mr. G. W. Sealy, 19, Redcliffe Gardens, S.W.10 ; Peci, Mr. G. E. Matthews, 53, Stockwell Green, S.W.9 ; Reg, Mr. H. Lees, 3, Campden House Chambers, W.8 ; Silex, Mr. J. L. Wolferstan, 5, Princess Square, Plymouth ; Sivart, Mr. C. Clay, 11, Tite Street, Chelsea ; Slugo, Mr. J. J. Holloway, Lyndale, Howard Road, New Malden, Surrey ; Splosh, Mr. L. Dale, Christ's Hospital, Sussex ; Vinjo, Mrs. C. B. Keston, 33A, Hogarth Road, S.W.5 ; Yoko, Mr. F. Rawson, 10, Richmond Mansions, Earl's Court, S.W.1 ; Zyme, Mr. J. W. Pulsford, 107A, Brixton Hill, S.W.

TETHERSTONES

by

ETHEL M. DELL

ILLUSTRATED BY P. B. HICKLING

PART IV.

CHAPTER V.

THE VISION.

LONDON skies and ceaseless rain, and the roar and swish of London traffic over the streaming roads! The tramp of many hurrying feet, the echo of careless voices vaguely heard, and the grey, grim river flowing out to the sea! How terrible it was! How inevitable! How—lonely!

She stood—a slim, dark figure—in the recess of the bridge leaning against the stone balustrade while the crowds passed by unheeding, and looked down into the dark-flowing water.

How long would it take, she wondered, how long a struggle in those dreadful depths before the soul rose free? And then—even then—would it be freedom, or slavery of another kind, a striving against yet more awful odds, a sinking into yet more fearful depths?

She looked up at the grey sky and felt the cold rain beating down upon her. Who was it Who had once said: "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you"? Strange that such words as those could ever be forgotten! They came upon her now almost as if they had been uttered aloud. And with them, very suddenly, came the memory of her prayer from the Tetherstones on the night of her great need. "From all evil and mischief, from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil, Good Lord deliver us!" And how wonderful—how God-sent—had been her deliverance! The thought of little Ruth shot across her mind like a ray of light. Again the childish fingers seemed to clasp her own, closely, confidingly, lovingly. It was like a message to her soul—the angel of her deliverance!

It was then that the power to pray came to Frances, there on the open crowded bridge between the grey skies and the grey river with the grey stone to support her. And when she ceased to pray, when the great moment passed—all too quickly, as such moments always must—when she woke again to physical misery and physical exhaustion, to the dripping skies and the leaden world and the dank uncleanness of the atmosphere, though no sign of any sort came in answer, yet she knew that her prayer was heard.

She turned and left the bridge, still with the feeling of that little hand in hers, and a sense of relief that was almost rejoicing in her heart. Though she had lost everything, though she trod the stones of the wilderness and the way before her was dark and steep and wholly unfamiliar, yet her fear had gone. The burden was lifted. For she knew that she was not alone. She returned to the great station and the vast hotel as one led.

She turned into the hotel vestibule, leaving the noise and the seething crowds, conscious of a great quietness that came as it were to meet her and folded her round. It was late afternoon, and her intention had been to give up her room, but she had not done so, and she did not now turn to the office. She went instead to a settee in a corner and sat down there as one who waited.

Somewhere in the distance a page-boy was calling a number in a raucous voice. No one responded to it, and she vaguely wished he would stop; for he intruded upon

Copyright, 1923, by Ethel M. Dell.

the peace of the atmosphere like a yapping dog heard in the silent hours of the night.

"*Two—four—nine! Two—four—nine!*" Now he had left the lounge and was coming down the corridor to the vestibule! The thing was beginning to get upon her nerves. She drew farther back into the corner as he approached.

"*Two—four—nine! Two—four—nine!*" He came close to her, paused, yelled the number straight at her so that she shrank, and then passed on to the almost empty vestibule, where he continued his intolerable cry without result.

His voice began to pass into the distance, to merge with the vague sounds that penetrated from without. Now she heard it no longer, and she breathed a sigh of thankfulness, and tried to return to the state of quiescent waiting which he had so rudely disturbed.

"*Two—four—nine! Two—four—nine!*" That page with the fiery buttons was returning!

Along the corridor he came, and she caught back a burst of terrible laughter that rose from her stone-cold heart at the sight. A minute figure with a brazen voice that bawled trumpet-wise, and bearing a brass salver with a telegram upon it. Now he approached her again, and she marvelled at the noise he made.

"*Two—four—nine! Two—four—nine!*" He came to her, he stopped again. He shouted his challenge full at her. Then he ceased.

He thrust the salver towards her, and spoke in a husky, confidential undertone. "Ain't that your number, miss? Two—four—nine! Thorold! Ain't that your name?"

She put out a hand mechanically. "Is it? Can it be? Yes, my name is Thorold."

She read the message in a sort of suspended silence that was peculiarly intense.

"I am in need of secretarial help. If you care to resume your position here as a temporary measure, please come to-night or wire. Rotherby, The Palace, Burminster."

A voice out of the void! A forgotten voice, but none the less clear! She looked up as it were through thinning mists and saw the boy's bright eyes watching her.

"Any answer, miss?" he suggested.

"No, none," she said, "none. I shall answer it in person."

Yes, her prayer was answered. A way was opened before her, and, stony and difficult though it might be, she knew that the needed strength to take it would be given. Her heart was beating again and alive with a great thankfulness.

And so, as her normal powers returned to her, she did not stay to question. She rose up to obey.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INQUISITION.

"I HAVE been given to understand," said the Bishop, "that circumstances have arisen which have made you not unwilling to return to me for a time."

"Yes, that is so," Frances said, "if you care to make use of me."

She had travelled down by a night-train, and not till the official hour of ten o'clock had the Bishop accorded her an interview. His austere countenance displayed no vestige of welcome even now, yet she had a curious conviction that he was not wholly displeased by her prompt reply to his invitation.

"Pray sit down!" he said, indicating a chair. "I have a few questions to ask you before we proceed any farther. I beg that you will reply to them as concisely as possible."

"I will do my best," Frances said.

He nodded, and she thought that the ascetic lines of his face became a shade less grim as he proceeded. "I will not disguise from you the fact that as a secretary I have not yet found your equal, but that was not my reason for sending you that message. Now, Miss Thorold, kindly pay attention to what I am going to say, for time is short. I am due to conduct the service in the cathedral in less than half an hour. I have a question to ask you primarily to which I must have a simple and unequivocal answer. When I discharged you some three months ago from my employment, I believed that an intrigue of an unworthy nature existed between my nephew and yourself. I ask you now—and you will answer me as before God—has there ever been any justification for that belief either before or since?"

And Frances answered him with the simplicity of one to whom shame was unknown: "There has never been the smallest justification."

Something of tension went out of the Bishop's attitude, but he kept his eyes upon her with a scrutiny that never varied. "That being the case," he said, "on the assumption that you have nothing to hide, I am going to ask you to give me a brief—really a brief—account, Miss Thorold, of all that has occurred between the date of your dismissal and the present time."

"I am sorry," she said, "but I am not prepared to do anything of the kind."

"You amaze me!" said the Bishop. He got up and began jerkily to pace the room, much as his nephew had done on the night that she had sat in judgment upon him. "Are you aware," he said after a moment, "that many men, and women also, have come to me with their confessions and

have eased their souls thereby of many burdens?"

She watched him with her clear eyes as he moved, and in her look was something faintly quizzical. "Yes," she said, "I can believe that many people find relief in throwing their burdens upon someone else. With me it is not so. I prefer to bear my own."

Miss Thorold," he said. "But I am willing to believe that your motives are genuine, though your methods do not always commend themselves to me. Sit down again, and kindly answer the few questions I shall put to you, which, you may be well assured, are dictated neither by curiosity nor impertinence. I have been placed in

"Are you aware," said the Bishop, "that many men, and women also, have come to me with their confessions and have eased their souls thereby of many burdens?"

He stopped and confronted her. "You presume to treat this subject with levity!" he said.

"Oh, believe me, no!" She rose quickly and faced him. "I have been through too much for that. But what I have been through, only God—Who has kept me safe—will ever know. I could not even begin to tell an outsider that."

The earnestness of her speech carried weight in spite of him. His face softened somewhat. "You are a strange woman,

a very peculiar position towards you, and I am doing what I conceive to be my duty."

"I will answer your questions to the best of my ability, my lord," she said.

"Enough," said the Bishop. 'First, then, when you left me, was it alone?"

"Quite alone," said Frances.

"And you went—where?"

"I went to a village on the moors called Brookside. It is a few miles from Fordestown. I found a lodging there."

"Ah! And my nephew knew your whereabouts?"

"Certainly he did. He had offered to find me employment. I had practically promised to be his secretary in the event of his writing a book."

"You did not consider that in any sense an indiscreet thing to do?" questioned the Bishop.

She felt herself colour slightly, but she answered him without hesitation. "Yes, I did. But beggars can't be choosers. I tried to keep things on a business footing. I thought he was merely sorry for me. I did not realize——" she stopped abruptly.

"That he was strongly attracted by you?" suggested the Bishop.

"I did not think I was sufficiently attractive for that to be possible," she answered with simplicity.

THE flicker of a smile crossed his hard features. "You do not know human nature very well," he observed. "But to continue! You went to Brookside. And then?"

"He came to see me there," Frances said.

"And made love to you?"

"Yes."

"Against your will?" asked the Bishop.

She met his look with great directness.

"No, it was not—at first—against my will. But I misunderstood him. And he misunderstood me. Afterwards—very soon afterwards—I found out my mistake. That is all I have to say upon that subject. It is over and done with now, and I do not wish to think of it again."

"You need not scruple," he said, "to speak freely to me upon this matter. Nothing that you may tell me will go beyond this room."

"Thank you," she said, but still she hesitated. She could not tell him of that terrible night with Montague upon the moors. At last, with an effort, "I had an unpleasant adventure," she said. "I was lost in a fog. A little blind girl from a farm near by called Tetherstones found me, and took me home with her. I was ill after that, and they nursed me."

"They?" queried the Bishop.

"The Dermots," she said.

"Tell me about them!" he said. "Of what does the family now consist?"

She told him, and he listened with close attention.

"And the child—she is blind, you say?"

"Not now," said Frances gently. "She is dead."

He bent his head. "How did she come to die?"

"It was an accident," Frances said. "It happened one night——"

She stopped. He was looking at her strangely.

"You are sure it was an accident?" he said.

She gazed back at him in amazement. "How could it have been anything else?"

He made a peculiar gesture as if to check her questioning. "And the old man? Tell me more about him! What form does his malady take?"

His manner was compelling. She found herself answering, though wonder still possessed her. "He suffers with his heart, and at times his brain wanders a little. He gave me the impression of being worn out, but I did not see a great deal of him."

"You never saw him when he was ill?" said the Bishop.

"Yes. He was not quite himself at the time. I sat with him for an afternoon. He spoke rather strangely, I remember. He——" Again she paused. Memory was crowding back upon her. The inexplicable horror with which that day she had been inspired returned to her. And suddenly a strange thing happened. It was as if a curtain had been rent aside, showing her in a single blinding moment of revelation the phantom of terror from whose unseen presence she had so often shrunk in fear.

She uttered a sharp gasp, and turned from the hard eyes that watched her. "That is all I can tell you," she said. Her loyalty to her friends at Tetherstones compelled her silence.

But the Bishop still sat before her, an uncompromising inquisitor who would not suffer her to go until he had obtained the last iota of information that he desired.

He spoke with cold peremptoriness. "Well, Miss Thorold, there remains the matter of your further adventures with my nephew. Your sojourn at Tetherstones at the time of your illness did not—apparently—terminate these. Do you object to telling me in what circumstances you left the Dermots?"

She met his look again. "In the first place I left them at night with your nephew. We went to an inn at Fordestown. He went up to town the next day, and I took a lodging in the place. I went back to Tetherstones about a week later at the request of old Dr. Square, who attended them. The little girl was ill and wanted me. She died that night."

"And you stayed on?" said the Bishop.

"I stayed on until two days ago, when I also went to town in the hope of selling some of my sketches. Your nephew had offered to help me."

"And that was your sole reason for going?" he said. "You expect me to believe that?"

She knitted her brows a little. "I would certainly rather you believed in me," she said. "But—I cannot give you any convincing reason for so doing."

"You can if you wish," said the Bishop.

She shook her head. "I am afraid not."

He rose. "By answering two questions which concern yourself alone. First, why are you not willing to marry my nephew?"

She looked at him slightly startled. "Because I don't love him," she said.

"Thank you," said the Bishop. "And is there any other man whom you would be willing to marry?"

His eyes held her. She felt the blood surge over her face, but she could not turn away. He waited inexorably for her reply.

"Yes, my lord," she said, and she spoke with a certain pride.

He held out his hand to her abruptly; there was even a glimmer of approval in his look. "Miss Thorold, you have convinced me," he said. "I have misjudged you, and I will make amends. I must go to prepare for the service. Perhaps you would like to walk in the garden and find refreshment there? I will ask you later to resume your secretarial duties."

He was gone. She heard the door shut definitely behind him, and the garden with its old-world peace seemed to call her. She went straight out into the quiet sunshine.

CHAPTER VII.

FAIR PLAY.

THE deep tones of the cathedral organ thrilled across the quiet garden. There came the chanting of boys' voices, and then a silence. She wandered on through the enchanted stillness, past the cloister arch, and so by winding paths down to the haunted water whither her fate had led her on that summer night that seemed so long ago.

She reached the yew tree by the lake where she and Montague had hidden together, and stood still. The dark boughs hanging down screened the farther side from her view, but the small fizz of a cigarette-end meeting the water awakened her very swiftly from her reverie. She drew herself together with an instinctive summoning of her strength to meet him.

But when he came round the great tree and joined her, she knew no fear, only a sense of the inevitableness of the interview.

He spoke at once, without greeting of any sort. "I've been waiting for you. You've seen the Bishop?"

"Yes," she made answer. "He has been—very good to me."

"I can hardly imagine that," said Rotherby dryly. "But he means well. Look here! I don't know whether you'll be angry, but I've told him everything. It was the only thing to do."

She stood before him with grave eyes meeting his. "Why should I be angry?" she said. "I think it was—rather brave of you."

"Brave!" he echoed, and his lips twisted a little as though they wanted to sneer. "Would you say that of the cur that takes refuge behind your skirt? No; wait! I'm not here to torment you with that sort of platitude. It doesn't matter what you think of me. I don't count. You'll never see me again after this show is over. I promise you that. I've led you a devil's dance, but I'm nearly done. First, then, I've got to own up to a lie. You remember that affair at Tetherstones—when I was shot waiting for you?"

"Oh, yes," she said. "Yes."

"It was not Arthur Dermot who fired that shot," Rotherby said. "It was the old man, and he meant murder, too. But Arthur and Oliver were both there, and that put him off, but somehow he got away. I bolted—with my usual bravery. Arthur is sane enough except when he sees red. But the old man—well, the old man is a raving lunatic at times, though he has his lucid intervals, I believe. He ought to be shut up, of course, but his wife has never been able to face it. It was poor Nan's trouble that sent him off his head in the first place, but if I had kept out of the way he would probably have remained harmless. You understand that, do you?"

"I am beginning to understand—many things," Frances said.

"Well, we needn't discuss that any further. He got wind of my coming, and he did his best to out me. He didn't succeed—perhaps fortunately, perhaps otherwise. Now to come to Arthur! After I had got down here yesterday and seen the Bishop, I wrote to Arthur. I told him the whole truth from beginning to end. He hasn't any illusions left by this time concerning you—or me either. I told him that I should go to-day to Fordestown, and from Fordestown I would meet him at the Stones at any hour that he cared to appoint, to give him such further satisfaction as he might wish to demand."

"Montague!" The name broke from her, little accustomed as she was to utter it. "Are you really mad?" she said.

"I am not," he answered briefly.

"But—but he will kill you if you meet again!"

He pulled a telegram from his pocket and gave it to her. She opened it with shaking

hands. Three words only—brief, characteristic, uncompromising: "*To-night at ten.*" No signature of any sort—only the bald reply!

She looked up. 'You mustn't go," she said. "Or if you do—I shall come too."

"No," said Rotherby.

She met his look. "Why do you say that? What do you mean?"

"I mean that you will never go anywhere with me again," he said.

"But—but——" she stumbled over the words, hearing other words ringing like hammer-strokes in her brain, "he will kill you—he has sworn to kill you if you go his way again."

"Do you think you could prevent it?" said Rotherby.

She crumpled the paper in her hand. "Yes, I could—I would—somehow."

"Very well. You can," he said.

His manner baffled her. She looked at him uncertainly. "Tell me what you mean!" she said again.

He made a curious gesture, as of a player who tosses down his last card, knowing himself a loser. "I mean," he said, "that you can go in my place. Either that—or I go alone."

Then she understood him, read the strategy by which he had sought to prove himself, and a deep pity surged up within her, blotting out all that had gone before.

"But I couldn't possibly go," she said. "It wouldn't really help, either, though"—she halted a little—"I know quite well what made you do it—and—I am grateful."

"One of us will go," Rotherby said, with decision. "That I swear to God. It is for you to decide which."

He was immovable; she saw it. Yet in despair she made another effort to move him. "But how could I go?" she protested. "It is utterly out of the question."

"After he has been told the truth in such a fashion that he cannot possibly doubt you?" said Rotherby. "Forgive me, but I thought—love—was capable of anything. If it isn't, well—as I said before—I go alone. That is quite final, so we needn't argue about it. There is a train to Fordestown at five this afternoon. I shall go by that, and pick up a conveyance at the station. You might give us a thought before you turn in. It'll be an interesting interview—even more so than our last."

He swung upon his heel with the words, but Frances threw out a hand, grasping his arm.

"Montague—please—you're not in earnest! You can't be! I mean—it's so utterly preposterous."

He stood still, the smile gone from his face. Very suddenly he threw aside the cloak of irony in which he had wrapped himself, and met her appeal with absolute sincerity.

"Aren't you satisfied?" he said. "Haven't I convinced you that I am playing the game—or trying to?"

She met his eyes, though she knew that her own were wet. "Yes, I am convinced," she said. "I am satisfied."

"Then what are you going to do?" he questioned.

Very simply she made answer. "I will go to Tetherstones."

He bent towards her. His voice came huskily. "I want to win your forgiveness," he said, and there was appeal in the pressure of his hand. "Have I got that?"

"Yes," she said.

"You are sure?" Voice and touch alike pleaded with her.

She felt the tears welling to her eyes. "From my very heart," she said. "Yes, I am sure."

She offered him both her hands, and he took and held them closely for a space, then abruptly he let them go.

"You will never love me," he said, "but it may please you some day to remember that you taught me how to love."

And with that he turned and walked away from her, not suffering himself to look back. She knew even as she watched him go that he would keep his word and that she would never see him again.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PLACE OF SACRIFICE.

THE rough track that led to the Stones was clearly defined in the radiance of a moon that was nearly full, and the Stones themselves stood up like sentinels on the hill. A wonderful place! Yes, a wonderful place, but how desolate and barbaric in its desolation!

A woman stood at the gate that opened from the lane on to that steep track. She had walked up from the village in the moonlight, and before her it was as clear as day, but she stood as one hesitating to emerge from the shadows. Her hands were folded together as if in prayer.

She came at last into the great circle, pushing through coarse straggling grass till she reached the smooth, boulder-strewn turf where the sheep and the goats had grazed. And here she stopped and looked around her in the moonlight with the feeling strong upon her that she was being watched.

"Why should I be afraid?" she whispered to herself, clenching her hands desperately to keep down the panic that was knocking

"Aren't you satisfied?" he said. "Haven't I convinced you that I am playing the game—or trying to?"

at her heart. "There is nothing here to hurt me. They are only stones."

"They are only stones," she said to herself again, and began to walk down the centre of the circle towards the Rocking Stone, defying that engulfing, fateful silence with all her strength. Within a dozen yards of it something stopped her, as surely as if a hand had caught her back. She stood still, not breathing.

Was it fancy? Was it reality? The monstrous thing was moving! Like a seated giant giving her salutation, it swayed slowly forward. And what were those long, crimson streaks upon it that gleamed as if wet in the moonlight?

She stood as one transfixed, possessed by horror. A devil's paradise! The words rushed meteor-like through her brain. Surely this gruesome place was haunted by devils!

Fascinated, she watched the great stone. Would it leave its resting-place, roll down to her, annihilate her? Had it started upon

its dread course, she knew she could not have avoided it.

That some animal might have set the thing in motion was a possibility that did not even cross her mind. She knew, without any proof, that some evil influence was at work.

Spellbound as one in a nightmare, she stood and watched, quaking and powerless, saw the thing begin to lift again like some prehistoric beast of prey rising from its slaughtered victim, saw it roll slowly back again soundlessly, as if on hinges, with the inevitable poise which alone kept it in its place, saw the dreadful crimson streaks and patches that dripped down its scarred front. And suddenly the bond that held her snapped. She turned from the dreadful sight and fled through the ghastly solitude as if she fled for her life.

She reached the open hillside beyond that awful circle, and here abruptly she was stayed. A maddening pain awoke in her side and she could go no farther. The pain was acute for a few seconds, and she crouched in the grass in her extremity, fighting for breath.

HER strength returned to her at last and she stood up. But she could not return to that terrible trysting-place. Since she could not return, she must wait on the hillside till he came. The appointed time must be drawing near now, and if she knew him he would not be late.

Immediately below her was the cattle-shed with its thatched roof, within which she and Montague Rotherby had found shelter on that night of fog when deliverance had so wonderfully come to her. Her mind dwelt upon the memory for a moment, then swiftly flashed back to the present, for, distinct in the stillness, there came to her the sound of feet upon the track. Her heart gave a wild bound of recognition. How well she knew that sound!

Slow and regular and unfalteringly firm, they mounted the steep ascent while she stood waiting in the shadow. Now she could see him, a dark and powerful figure walking with bent head, coming straight towards her, pursuing his undeviating course. Now he was close at hand. And now——

What moved her suddenly to look towards the cattle-shed—the flash of something that gleamed with a steely brightness in the moonlight, or an influence more subtle and infinitely more compelling? She knew not, but in that moment she looked, and, looking, sprang forward with a cry. For in the entrance, clear against the blackness behind, she saw a face, corpse-like in its whiteness, but alive with a murderous malice—the face of a devil.

Her cry arrested the man upon the path. He stood still, and she rushed to him with arms outspread, intervening between him and the evil thing that lurked in the shed.

She reached him, flung her arms around him. "Arthur—Arthur! For God's sake—come away from this dreadful place—this dreadful place!"

Wildly she poured forth the words, seeking with frantic urgency to turn him from the path. But he stood like a rock, resisting her.

"What are you doing here?" he said.

She tried to tell him, but explanation failed. "I came to meet you, but—there is—there is something dreadful in the barn. Don't go near! Come away! Oh, come away!"

But still he stood, resisting her desperate efforts to move him. "I have come to meet Rotherby," he said. "You go—and let me meet him alone!"

The curt words steadied her somewhat, but she could not let him go. "Arthur, please—listen!" she urged. "He isn't here. I came in his place. But there is something terrible in the shed. I don't know what. I only know—I only know—that the whole place is full of evil, and the thing I saw—the thing I saw—is probably one of many."

She was trembling violently, and his hand came up and supported her. "Oh, why did you come?" he said, and his tone held more of reproach than questioning.

She answered him notwithstanding. "I had to come. There was no choice. But don't let us stay! I have seen the Rocking Stone move! I have seen—a thing like a devil in the barn!"

He turned towards the barn. "Your nerves have been playing you tricks," he said. "There is nothing here."

"It couldn't have been fancy. I am not fanciful. Arthur, don't go! Don't go!"

He stopped and looked at her, and in his eyes was that which strangely moved her, stilling her entreaty, overwhelming her fear, banishing every thought in her heart but the one great rapture of her soul as it leapt to his.

So for a long moment they stood, then his arm went round her.

"We will go to the Stones," he said, "and leave these banshees to look after themselves. It was probably a goat you saw."

As they passed into the great arena he uttered a groan, and his arm relaxed and fell. "This is absolute madness," he said. "I told you before. I am tied. I am a prisoner. I shall never be free." The iron of despair was in his voice.

"Then I will be a prisoner, too," she said.

"No—no! Why did that scoundrel send

you to me? Why didn't he come himself?" He flung the words passionately, as though the emotions surging within him were greater than he could control.

But she answered him steadfastly, without agitation. "Arthur, listen! He sent me to you because he is ashamed of all that has gone before, and because he wished to make amends. He has gone out of my life. But I have forgiven him, and—some day—I hope you will forgive him, too."

"Never!" he said. "Never! I would have killed him with my naked hands if I had had the chance."

She suppressed a shiver at the memory his words called up. "That is not worthy of you. Forgiveness is a greater thing than revenge—oh, so much greater. And love is greater than all. You won't believe it, but—he was capable of love."

"He was capable of anything," Arthur said, "except playing a straight game."

"You are wrong," she said earnestly. "You are wrong. He has played a straight game now in telling you the truth, and in sending me to you. He made me come, do you understand? I didn't want to—I would rather have done anything than come. But he would have come himself if I hadn't. And so——"

"You came to save his life?" suggested Arthur, with a bitter sneer.

She answered him with the simplicity that is above bitterness. "I came to save your both."

They went on together, side by side down that great arena, the gaunt Stones all around them like monstrous idols in a forgotten place of worship. They drew near to the Rocking Stone, and very suddenly Arthur stopped.

How long they stood thus she did not know. She began to realize that he was bracing himself anew for sacrifice, that he was battling desperately for the mastery against odds such as even he had never faced before. She saw him once more as a gladiator, terrible in his resolution, indomitable as the Stones he faced, invincible so long as the breath remained in his body. And faint, thread-like, as a far-off echo, she heard a voice—whether of child or angel she knew not: "You'll find it up by the Stones, where the giant harebells grow. It's the most precious thing in the world, and when you find it, keep it—always—always—always!" The giant harebells! She saw them, pale in the moonlight, and in memory of little Ruth she stooped to gather one.

It was then that it happened—so suddenly, so appallingly—with a crash as if the heavens were rent above her. A blinding red flame seemed to spring from the very ground in front of her, the smell of burning choked her senses. The whole world rocked and burst into a blaze. She went backwards, conscious of Arthur's arms around her, conscious that they fell together—or were they hurled into space among the wandering star-atoms to drift for evermore hither and thither—spirits without a home?

CHAPTER IX.

"WHERE THE GIANT HAREBELLS GROW."

WHO was that whispering behind the screen? Lucy and Nell could it be, audible as ever, though hidden from sight? It was like a long-forgotten story, begun years since and never finished.

"Dr. Square says she may just drift away and never recover consciousness at all; but her heart is a little stronger than it was, and she is able to take nourishment, so she may rally and sleep it off. I wonder if she will remember anything if she does."

"Oh, I hope—I hope she won't!" This was surely Lucy's voice, hushed and tearful. "She may have seen him lying dead, all torn by the explosion. It would be dreadful for her to remember that."

"Well, thank God he is dead!" Nell spoke stoutly, as one expectant of rebuke. "The life we have led has been enough to kill us all. Whatever happens, things must get better now."

"But think of Mother!" Lucy's whisper was broken with tears.

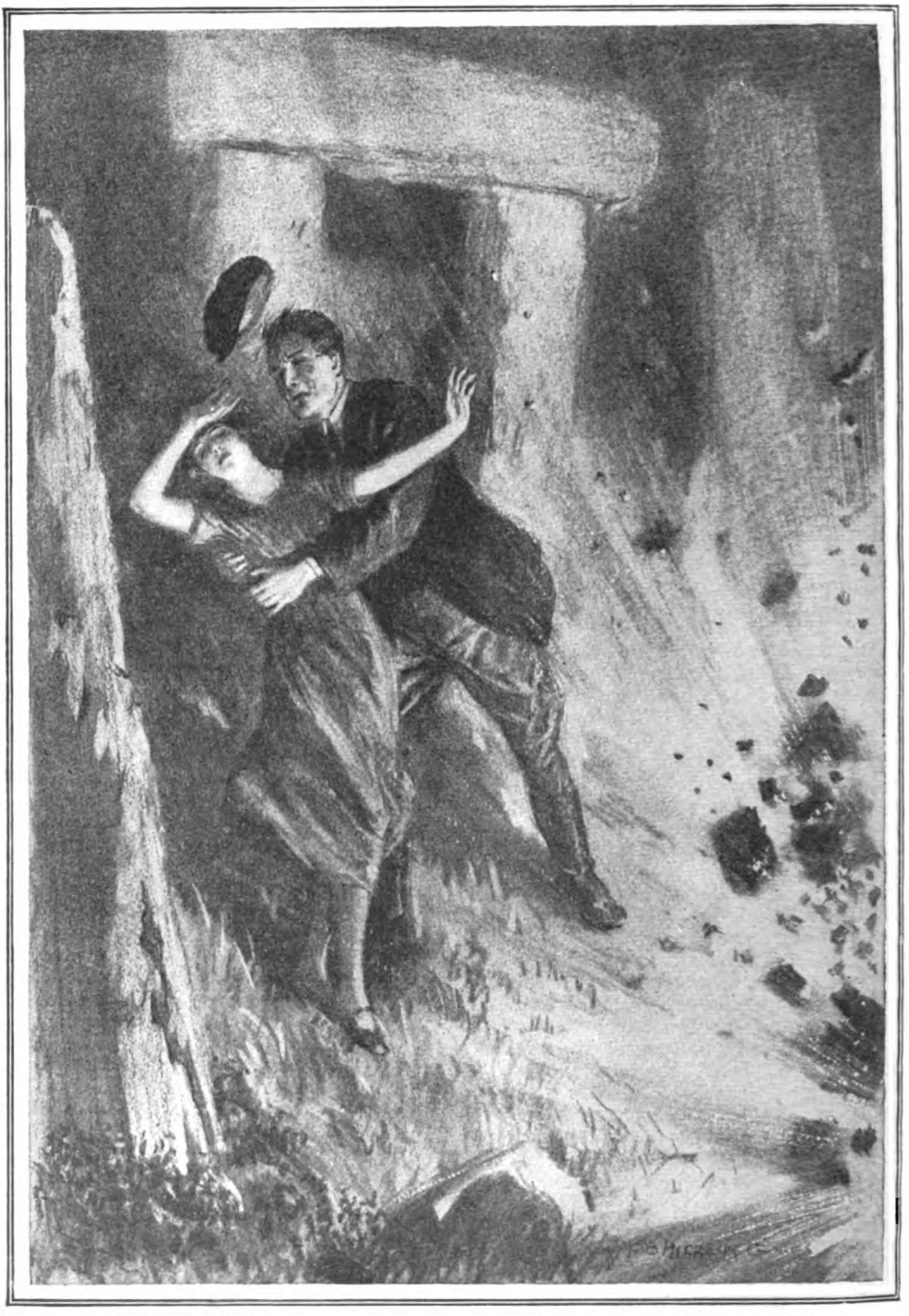
"I do think of her. And I know she is thankful, too. My dear, you are thankful yourself. Why disguise it? It isn't wrong to be thankful." Nell spoke with vigorous decision. "If only *she* gets over this—and I don't see why she shouldn't, for it's only shock, nothing else—why, all our troubles will be over. The inquest was the simplest thing in the world—nothing but sympathy and condolences, no tiresome questions at all. I'm ashamed of you, Lucy, for having so little spirit. Don't you see what it means to us? Why, we're free—we're free—we're free!"

To which, sighing, Lucy could only answer: "It doesn't seem right. And she hasn't got over it yet, and even if she does——"

"Which she will!" Nell's voice arose above a whisper and rang with confidence. "Which she shall and will! How I would like to know what brought her there! I wonder if she will ever tell us."

"I wonder," murmured Lucy.

Thereafter, for a space, there was silence, and then there began that gradual groping towards the light which comes to a brain awakening. Who was it who was lying dead



A biinding red flame seemed to spring from the very ground in front of her. She went backwards, conscious of Arthur's arms around her.

among the Stones? And why were they all so thankful? Then at last she opened her eyes to the soft sunshine of late autumn, and awoke from her long, trance-like sleep.

Someone rose to minister to her, and she saw the white-haired mother with her patient eyes bending over her. She smiled upon her with a great tenderness.

"So you are awake!" she said, and Frances knew that she was glad. "Don't try to move too quickly! Just wait till your strength comes back!"

"Am I ill, then?" Frances asked her, wondering.

And she answered gently: "No, dear; only tired. You will be quite all right presently. Just lie still!"

SO Frances lay still and pondered, fitting the puzzle piece by piece, slowly, painfully, till at length, with returning memory, the picture was complete. But who was lying dead among the Stones? And why—oh, why—were they thankful?

There came to her again the memory of Arthur's arms holding her. And they had gone out together into the star-wide spaces. How was it that she had returned—alone?

Something awoke within her, urging her. She sat up, not conscious of any effort. She must find out for herself. She must go to the Stones. If he were dead—and in her heart she knew he must be—she would meet his spirit there.

And she must go alone.

She met Mrs. Dermot's gentle questioning very steadfastly. "I want to get up, please," she said. "I am going to the Stones—to look for something."

She expected opposition, but she met with none. Mrs. Dermot seemed to understand.

She helped her to dress, but she did not offer to accompany her. And so presently Frances found herself out in the misty sunshine, hastening with a desperate concentration of will towards the place of sacrifice.

She never remembered any stages of her journey later, so fixed was she upon reaching her destination, reaching the Stones at length and moving fearlessly in among the long shadows cast by the setting sun. She walked straight down the great circle, looking neither to right nor to left, straight to that point whence she had stood and watched the ghostly Rocking Stone sway before her like a prehistoric monster in dumb salute. And here she stood again, arrested by a sight that made her suddenly cold. The Rocking Stone was gone—crumbled into a shattered heap of grey stones, around which the giant harebells still flowered in their purple splendour!

She caught her breath. This was where he was lying dead. This was where she would meet his spirit.

Again little Ruth's message ran like a silvery echo through the seething uncertainty of her soul. "You'll find it up by the Stones, where the giant harebells grow—something that you're wanting—that you've wanted always—very big—bigger even than the Rocking Stone. If you can't find it by yourself, Uncle Arthur will help you. You'll know it when you find it—because it's the most precious thing in the world."

She lifted her clasped hands above the ruin before her and prayed—prayed aloud and passionately, pouring forth the anguish of her soul.

"O God, let him come to me—only once—only once! O God, send his spirit back to me—if only for one moment—that we may know that our love is eternal—that holy thing—that nothing—can ever change—or take away!"

And so she waited for that unseen presence among the barren and desolate Stones, felt it drawing near to her, felt the surge and quiver of her heart at its nearness. And then—very suddenly—a great wave of exaltation that was almost more than she could bear caught her, uplifted her, compelled her. She turned by no volition of her own—and met him face to face.

"Arthur!" she said.

And heard his answering voice, deeply moved, deeply tender. "Frances! Frances! Frances!"

She was in his arms, she was clinging to him, before she knew that it was flesh and blood that had answered her cry. But she knew it then. His lips upon her own dispelled all doubt, banished all questioning. The rapture of those moments was the rapture which few may ever know on earth. He had come back to her, as it were, from the dead.

His arm was about her. He held her very closely.

"Why did you come up here?" he asked her.

And when she answered, "To find you," he drew her closer still.

"My mother told me. I followed you. She would have told you everything if you had asked, but the doctor said it must come gradually. She was afraid of giving you a shock."

"I was afraid to ask," said Frances.

He looked down at her. "You're not afraid now. Shall I tell you everything?"

She met his look. "I know a good deal I know about—Nan, and about your father—at least in part."

"You have got to know—everything," he said, and stopped where he had stopped once before to gaze out between the Stones

to the infinite distance. "And you are to understand, Frances, that what has passed between us now can be wiped out—as if it had never been, if you so desire it. You know about—my sister Nan." His voice dropped. "I can't talk about her even to you, except to tell you that you are somehow like her. That was what made my father take to you. He didn't take to any strangers as a rule. Neither did I." Again she was conscious of the close holding of his arm, but he did not turn his eyes towards her. He went sombrely on. "We gave up everything and came here because the trouble over Nan had turned his brain. He wanted to tear across the world and kill my cousin. So did I—once. But—my mother—well, you know my mother. You realized long ago that all we did was for her sake. And so—since, so far as we knew, my father had only the one mania and was sane on all other points—we came here. Nan's baby was born here. We settled down. My father never liked the life, but he got better. Then—one winter night—the madness broke out again. I was away on business. He got up in the early morning, went to Nan's room, and ordered her out of the house with her child. He terrified her, and she went. The next morning she was found up by the Stones in deep snow, dead. The child was living, but she was always a weakling, and she lost her sight. My father had a seizure when he heard that Nan was dead. In his delirium he told them what he had done. But when he came to himself he had forgotten, and his distress over the loss of Nan was heartrending. After that I never left home again. Either Oliver or I kept guard day and night. But except for occasional outbursts of unreasonable anger he became much better, almost normal. He regarded me as his jailer and hated me, but he always worshipped my mother. I believe it would have killed him to be parted from her. Better if it had, perhaps, but—it's too late now. What I did, I did for the best." He uttered a heavy sigh. "It brutalized me. I couldn't help it. It didn't seem to matter. Nothing ever mattered till you came. I was harsh with the girls, I was harsh with everyone—except my mother. Life was so damnable. God only knows what it was."

"I can guess," whispered Frances.

His brooding eyes softened somewhat, but still he did not look at her. "Then you came. You changed everything. But that letter—you remember that lost letter? My father found it, recognized the writing, knew that my cousin was in the neighbourhood. That brought everything back. Somehow from the first he always connected you with Nan. There is a resemblance, though I can't tell you where it lies. On the night my cousin came to meet you at the Stones—that ghastly night—he broke out. I think you know what happened. He tried to murder him, but he got away. Oliver was there, but he ought to have been earlier. However, my cousin got away, and my father dodged us and came back to the house. There he left his gun, thinking he had killed his man. Then he must have seen the child. Possibly she spoke to him. I don't know. But the lust for murder was on him that night. He followed her to the Stones, dodging us again, and saw her climb on to the Rocking Stone. He had made a great study of the Stones, and it was he who had discovered how to make the thing move. He used his knowledge on that occasion, and—and—well, you know what happened." His arm tightened about her convulsively.

"My dear—my dear!" Frances said. But she was thinking of the man's own agony which she had witnessed in the farm kitchen on the night of little Ruth's death.

HE went on with an effort. "I was nearly mad with trouble myself after that. And afterwards—when you were gone and I guessed from what Maggie said that you had been inveigled into going up to town alone to meet that scoundrel, I couldn't stand it any longer. I had to follow you. I went to his rooms and I dogged him that night. I was like a man possessed—as much a murderer at heart as my father had ever been. If you hadn't stopped me, I should have killed him. But—oh, Frances"—his deep voice broke—"nothing was worth while after that lie of yours. If it hadn't been for my mother I should have put an end to myself."

She laid her cheek against his shoulder. "Arthur! Do you think I found it easy—to lie? It nearly killed me too."

"Wait!" he said. "Hear it all! I came back. I found my father better. But I was at the end of my endurance. I couldn't go on. I told my mother so. Then I had my cousin's letter, telling me everything, vindicating you. I shouldn't have believed him if I hadn't known you. But—knowing you—I knew it was true. He asked for a meeting, and I agreed. Somehow I couldn't help it. It seemed inevitable. You know how sometimes one is pushed by Fate. I was bound to agree. I don't know what would have happened if I had met him. I might have killed him. I can't say. But I had only my hands to do it with. I didn't set out to kill him. And then—you came instead. You were frightened. You thought you had seen a

"Ah, don't you understand?" she said. "I love you—I have always loved you—
I shall love you till I die."

devil. Do you know what it was you saw ? "

" Your father ! " she whispered.

" My father, yes. He had been wandering among the Stones, and I can only think that he had remembered about the child, and in a fit of mad remorse he had made up his mind to destroy the Rocking Stone—possibly himself also. It is all surmise now. Anyhow, when you saw the Stone move, he must have been putting the charge underneath. Perhaps he took me for Montague, and he may have thought you were Nan. I don't know. It is impossible to say. Anyway, he fired the fuse and blasted the Stones. God only knows how we escaped unhurt. But he—but he——"

" He was killed ? " said Frances.

' Yes, instantly. When I came to myself, you were unconscious and he was lying dead among the Stones. Oliver and some of the men heard the noise and came up. We carried you back. I thought you were dead, but Dr. Square said it was only shock, that in a few days, given absolute quiet, you might recover."

" A few days ! " said Frances, wonderingly.

" It happened a week ago," he said. " You were semi-conscious once or twice, and then you seemed to sleep. That was what brought you back."

" How amazing ! " she said.

He turned for the first time and looked down into her upraised face. " I thought you would never come back," he said, and in voice and look she gauged the misery to which he gave no words. " I never had any hope."

The tears sprang to her eyes. She clung to him voicelessly for a few seconds. Then, " And I thought you were dead ! " she whispered. " That was why I didn't dare to ask ! "

He took her shoulders between his hands, holding her slightly from him. " Frances, listen ! " he said. " I'm going to be fair to you. I won't take you—like this. You don't know what I am—a hard man, melancholy, bitter, the son of a murderer, not fit for any woman to love, much less marry. I am going away—as I said. Maggie and Oliver will run the farm. My mother will stay on with them. The girls will either stay or find their own way in the world. I've come to see that it isn't for me to hold them in any longer. Maggie made me realize that—you too. But I always had the thought of Nan before me. That was what made me so hard with them. But I'm going away now. And you will go back to the Bishop. He wants you. I believe he will be decent to you. I have heard from him about you. Some day—some day—you will find a man worthy of you. Not me—not Montague—someone you can give your whole heart to—and trust."

And then, with a gesture of renunciation, he dropped his hands from her and let her go.

" That's all," he said, and there was a tremor in his voice which thrilled her through and through. " You are free. I am going. Good-bye ! "

He turned away from her with the words. He would have gone. But in that instant Frances spoke—in the language that comes from the heart and speaks to the heart alone.

" I am not free," she said, " and you can never make me so. I am yours—as you are mine—for ever and ever. Nothing can ever alter that, because—God made it so."

Then, as he stood motionless, she went close to him, twining her arm in his, drawing him to her.

" Ah, don't you understand ? " she said. " I love you—I have always loved you—I shall love you till I die."

And then he yielded. He turned with a low, passionate sound that was almost of pain, and held her to him, bowing his head against her, beaten at last.

" You are sure ? " he said, and she felt the sob he stifled. " Frances, you are sure ? Before God—this is for your own sake—not for mine ? "

She held him to her, so that the throbbing of her heart was against his own. " But you and I are one," she said. " God made us so."

THE church clock struck the hour, and they looked at one another with the dismay of lovers for whom time flies on wings. Down the hill at the farm they heard Roger's voice uplifted in cheery admonition. The cows were being driven back to pasture for the night, and Maggie's song came lilting through the gloaming.

" Shall we go back to Tetherstones ? " Arthur said.

And Frances nodded silently.

They left the place of sacrifice hand in hand.

THE END.

NOV 6 1923

A. CONAN DOYLE'S LIFE STORY

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

£500 in Prizes
SEE ADVERT PAGE 10

P. G. WODEHOUSE
W. B. MAXWELL PERCEVAL GIBBON
"OLE LUK-OIE" E. P. OPPENHEIM

FOOT TORTURES!

CORNS · CALLOUSES · BLISTERS · BURNING ·
ACHING · SORENESS · SWELLINGS · TENDERNESS ·

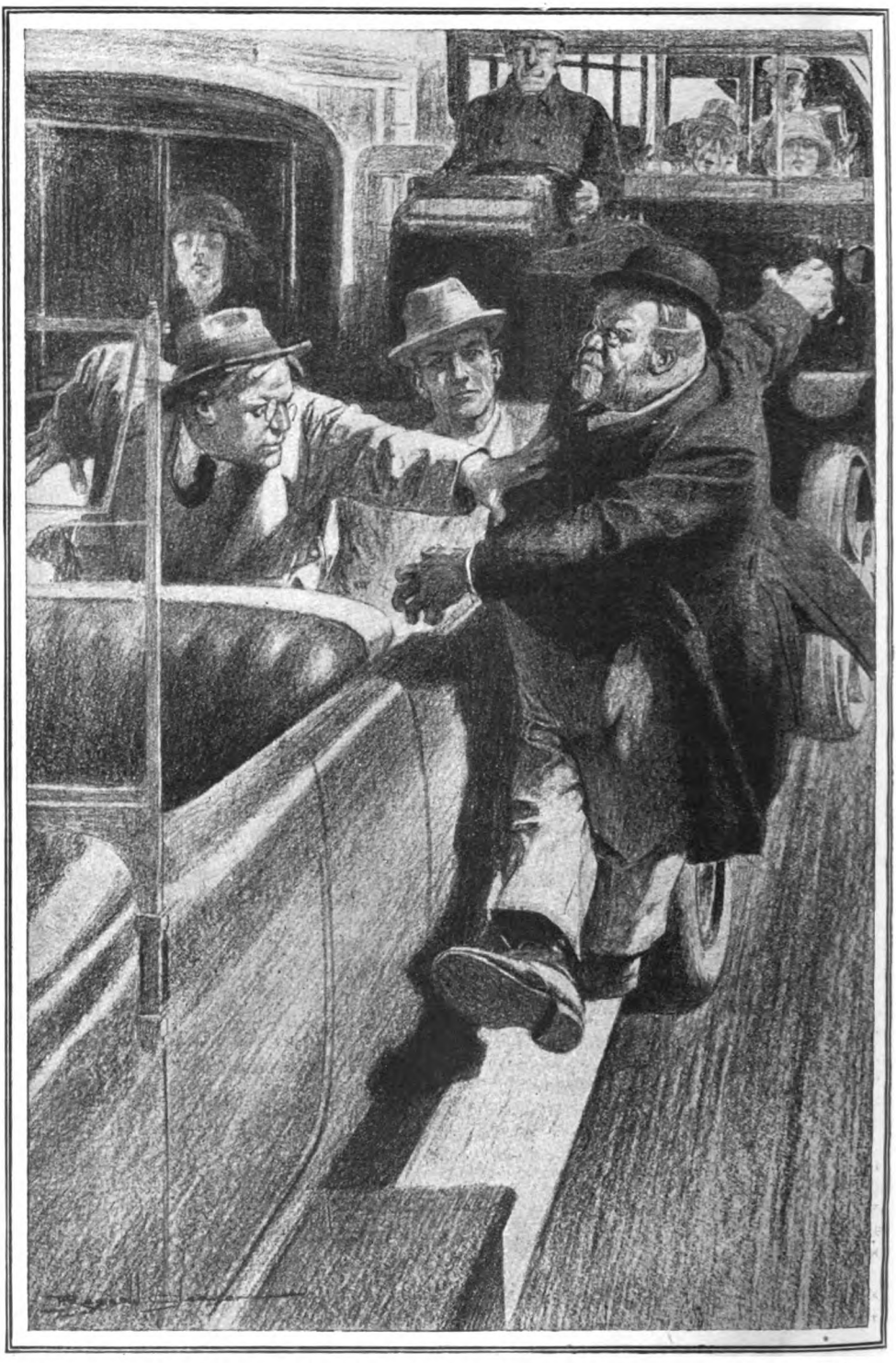
VANISH!!

REUDEL BATH SALTRATES

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED
OR MONEY BACK IN FULL ·

OBTAINABLE FROM
ALL CHEMISTS
EVERYWHERE.

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
November, 1923.



THE MAN EXECUTED A CUMBERSOME LEAP AND LANDED ON OUR RUNNING-BOARD. UKRIDGE PUT OUT A LARGE, FLAT HAND AND PUSHED.

(See page 432.)

NO WEDDING BELLS FOR HIM

by

P. G. WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

TO Ukridge, as might be expected from one of his sunny optimism, the whole affair has long since come to present itself in the light of yet another proof of the way in which all things in this world of ours work together for good. In it, from start to finish, he sees the finger of Providence; and, when marshalling evidence to support his theory that a means of escape from the most formidable perils will always be vouchsafed to the righteous and deserving, this is the episode which he advances as Exhibit A.

The thing may be said to have had its beginning in the Haymarket one afternoon towards the middle of the summer. We had been lunching at my expense at the Pall Mall Restaurant, and as we came out a large and shiny car drew up beside the kerb and the chauffeur, alighting, opened the bonnet and began to fiddle about in its interior with a pair of pliers. Had I been alone, a casual glance in passing would have contented me, but for Ukridge the spectacle of somebody else working always had an irresistible fascination, and, gripping my arm, he steered me up to assist him in giving the toiler moral support. About two minutes after he had started to breathe earnestly on the man's neck, the latter, seeming to become aware that what was tickling his back hair was not some wandering June zephyr, looked up with a certain petulance.

"'Ere!" he said, protestingly. Then his annoyance gave place to something which—for a chauffeur—approached cordiality. "'Ullo!" he observed.

"Why, hullo, Frederick," said Ukridge. "Didn't recognize you. Is this the new car?"

"Ah," nodded the chauffeur.

"Pal of mine," explained Ukridge to me in a brief aside. "Met him in a pub." London was congested with pals whom Ukridge had met in pubs. "What's the trouble?"

"Missing," said Frederick the chauffeur. "Soon 'ave her right."

His confidence in his skill was not misplaced. After a short interval he straightened himself, closed the bonnet, and wiped his hands.

"Nice day," he said.

"Terrific," agreed Ukridge. "Where are you off to?"

"Got to go to Addington. Pick up the guv'nor, playin' golf there." He seemed to hesitate for a moment, then the mellowing influence of the summer sunshine asserted itself. "Like a ride as far as East Croydon? Get a train back from there."

It was a handsome offer, and one which neither Ukridge nor myself felt disposed to decline. We climbed in, Frederick trod on the self-starter, and off we bowled, two gentlemen of fashion taking their afternoon airing. Speaking for myself, I felt tranquil and debonair, and I have no reason to suppose that Ukridge was otherwise. The deplorable incident which now occurred was thus rendered doubly distressing. We had stopped at the foot of the street to allow the north-bound traffic to pass, when our pleasant after-luncheon torpidity was shattered by a sudden and violent shout.

Copyright, 1923, by P. G. Wodehouse.

"Hi!"

That the shouter was addressing us there was no room for doubt. He was standing on the pavement not four feet away, glaring unmistakably into our costly tonneau—a stout, bearded man of middle age, unsuitably clad, considering the weather and the sartorial prejudices of Society, in a frock-coat and a bowler hat. "Hi! You!" he bellowed, to the scandal of all good passers-by.

Frederick the chauffeur, after one swift glance of godlike disdain out of the corner of his left eye, had ceased to interest himself in this undignified exhibition on the part of one of the lower orders, but I was surprised to observe that Ukridge was betraying all the discomposure of some wild thing taken in a trap. His face had turned crimson and assumed a bulbous expression, and he was staring straight ahead of him with a piteous effort to ignore what manifestly would not be ignored.

"I'd like a word with you," boomed the bearded one.

And then matters proceeded with a good deal of rapidity. The traffic had begun to move on now, and as we moved with it, travelling with increasing speed, the man appeared to realize that if 'twere done 'twere well 'twere done quickly. He executed a cumbersome leap and landed on our running-board; and Ukridge, coming suddenly to life, put out a large, flat hand and pushed. The intruder dropped off, and the last I saw of him he was standing in the middle of the road, shaking his fist, in imminent danger of being run over by a number three omnibus.

"Gosh!" sighed Ukridge, with some feverishness.

"What was it all about?" I inquired.

"Bloke I owe a bit of money to," explained Ukridge, tersely.

"Ah!" I said, feeling that all had been made clear. I had never before actually seen one of Ukridge's creditors in action, but he had frequently given me to understand that they lurked all over London like leopards in the jungle, waiting to spring on him. There were certain streets down which he would never walk for fear of what might befall.

"Been trailing me like a bloodhound for two years," said Ukridge. "Keeps bobbing up when I don't expect him and turning my hair white to the roots."

I was willing to hear more, and even hinted as much, but he relapsed into a moody silence. We were moving at a brisk clip into Clapham Common when the second of the incidents occurred which were to make this drive linger in the memory. Just as we came in sight of the Common, a fool of a girl loomed up right before our front wheels. She had been crossing the road, and now, after the manner of her species, she lost her head. She was a large, silly-looking girl, and she darted to and fro like a lunatic hen; and as Ukridge and I rose simultaneously from our seats, clutching each other in agony, she tripped over her feet and fell. But Frederick, master of his craft, had the situation well in hand. He made an inspired swerve, and when we stopped a moment later the girl was picking herself up, dusty, but still in one piece.

THESE happenings affect different men in different ways. In Frederick's cold grey eye as he looked over his shoulder and backed the car there was only the weary scorn of a superman for the never-ending follies of a woollen-headed proletariat. I, on the other hand, had reacted in a gust of nervous profanity. And Ukridge, I perceived as I grew calmer, the affair had touched on his chivalrous side. All the time we were backing he was mumbling to himself, and he was out of the car, bleating apologies, almost before we had stopped.

"Awfully sorry. Might have killed you. Can't forgive myself."

The girl treated the affair in still another way. She giggled. And somehow that brainless laugh afflicted me more than anything that had gone before. It was not her fault, I suppose. This untimely mirth was merely due to disordered nerves. But I had taken a prejudice against her at first sight.

"I do hope," babbled Ukridge, "you aren't hurt? Do tell me you aren't hurt."

The girl giggled again. And she was at least twelve pounds too heavy to be a giggler. I wanted to pass on and forget her.

"No, reely, thanks."

"But shaken, what?"

"I did come down a fair old bang," chuckled this repellent female.

"I thought so. I was afraid so. Shaken. Ganglions vibrating. You must let me drive you home."

"Oh, it doesn't matter."

"I insist. Positively I insist!"

"'Ere!" said Frederick the chauffeur, in a low, compelling voice.

"Eh?"

"Got to get on to Addington."

"Yes, yes, yes," said Ukridge, with testy impatience, quite the seigneur resenting interference from an underling. "But there's plenty of time to drive this lady home. Can't you see she's shaken? Where can I take you?"

"It's only just round the corner in the next street. Balbriggan the name of the house is."

"Balbriggan, Frederick, in the next street," said Ukridge, in a tone that brooked no argument.

I suppose the spectacle of the daughter of the house rolling up to the front door in a Daimler is unusual in Peabody Road, Clapham Common. At any rate, we had hardly drawn up when Balbriggan began to exude its occupants in platoons. Father, mother, three small sisters, and a brace of brothers were on the steps in the first ten seconds. They surged down the garden path in a solid mass.

Ukridge was at his most spacious. Quickly establishing himself on the footing of a friend of the family, he took charge of the whole affair. Introductions sped to and fro, and in a few moving words he explained the situation, while I remained mute and insignificant in my corner and Frederick the chauffeur stared at his oil-gauge with a fathomless eye.

"Couldn't have forgiven myself, Mr. Price, if anything had happened to Miss Price. Fortunately my chauffeur is an excellent driver and swerved just in time. You showed great presence of mind, Frederick," said Ukridge, handsomely, "great presence of mind."

Frederick continued to gaze aloofly at his oil-gauge.

"What a lovely car, Mr. Ukridge!" said the mother of the family.

"Yes?" said Ukridge, airily. "Yes, quite a good old machine."

"Can you drive yourself?" asked the smaller of the two small brothers, reverently.

"Oh, yes. Yes. But I generally use Frederick for town work."

"Would you and your friend care to come in for a cup of tea?" said Mrs. Price.

I could see Ukridge hesitate. He had only recently finished an excellent lunch, but there was that about the offer of a free meal which never failed to touch a chord in him. At this point, however, Frederick spoke.

"'Ere!" said Frederick.

"Eh?"

"Got to get on to Addington," said Frederick, firmly.

Ukridge started as one waked from a dream. I really believe he had succeeded in persuading himself that the car belonged to him.

"Of course, yes. I was forgetting. I have to be at Addington almost immediately. Promised to pick up some golfing friends. Some other time, eh?"

"Any time you're in the neighbourhood, Mr. Ukridge," said Mr. Price, beaming upon the popular pet.

"Thanks, thanks."

"Tell me, Mr. Ukridge," said Mrs. Price. "I've been wondering ever since you told me your name. It's such an unusual one. Are you any relation to the Miss Ukridge who writes books?"

"My aunt," beamed Ukridge.

"No, really? I do love her stories so. Tell me——"

Frederick, whom I could not sufficiently admire, here broke off what promised to be a lengthy literary discussion by treading on the self-starter, and we drove off in a flurry of good wishes and invitations. I rather fancy I heard Ukridge, as he leaned over the back of the car, promising to bring his aunt round to Sunday supper some time. He resumed his seat as we turned the corner and at once began to moralize.

"Always sow the good seed, laddie. Absolutely nothing to beat the good seed. Never lose the chance of establishing yourself. It is the secret of a successful life. Just a few genial words, you see, and here I am with a place I can always pop into for a bite when funds are low."

I was shocked at his sordid outlook, and said so. He rebuked me out of his larger wisdom.

"It's all very well to take that attitude, Corky my boy, but do you realize that a family like that has cold beef, baked potatoes, pickles, salad, blanc-mange, and some sort of cheese every Sunday night after Divine service? There are moments in a man's life, laddie, when a spot of cold beef with blanc-mange to follow means more than words can tell."

IT was about a week later that I happened to go to the British Museum to gather material for one of those brightly informative articles of mine which appeared from time to time in the weekly papers. I was wandering through the place, accumulating data, when I came upon Ukridge with a small boy attached to each hand. He seemed a trifle weary, and he welcomed me with something of the gratification of the shipwrecked mariner who sights a sail.

"Run along and improve your bally minds, you kids," he said to the children. "You'll find me here when you've finished."

"All right, Uncle Stanley," chorused the children.

"Uncle Stanley?" I said, accusingly.

He winced a little. I had to give him credit for that.

"Those are the Price kids. From Clapham."

"I remember them."

"I'm taking them out for the day. Must repay hospitality, Corky my boy."

"Then you have really been inflicting yourself on those unfortunate people?"

"I have looked in from time to time," said Ukridge, with dignity.

"It's just over a week since you met them. How often have you looked in?"

"Couple of times, perhaps. Maybe three."

"To meals?"

"There was a bit of browsing going on," admitted Ukridge.

"And now you're Uncle Stanley!"

"Fine, warm-hearted people," said Ukridge, and it seemed to me that he spoke with a touch of defiance. "Made me one of the family right from the beginning. Of course, it cuts both ways. This afternoon, for instance, I got landed with those kids. But, all in all, taking the rough with the smooth, it has worked out distinctly on the right side of the ledger. I own I'm not over keen on the hymns after Sunday supper, but the supper, laddie, is undeniable. As good a bit of cold beef," said Ukridge, dreamily, "as I ever chewed."

"Greedy brute," I said, censoriously.

"Must keep body and soul together, old man. Of course, there are one or two things about the business that are a bit embarrassing. For instance, somehow or other they seem to have got the idea that that car we turned up in that day belongs to me, and the kids are always pestering me to take them for a ride. Fortunately I've managed to square Frederick, and he thinks he can arrange for a spin or two during the next few days. And then Mrs. Price keeps asking me to bring my aunt round for a cup of tea and a chat, and I haven't the heart to tell her that my aunt absolutely and finally disowned me the day after that business of the dance."

"You didn't tell me that."

"Didn't I? Oh, yes. I got a letter from her saying that as far as she was concerned I had ceased to exist. I thought it showed a nasty, narrow spirit, but I can't say I was altogether surprised. Still, it makes it awkward when Mrs. Price wants to get matey with her. I've had to tell her that my aunt is a chronic invalid and never goes out, being practically bedridden. I find all this a bit wearing, laddie."

"I suppose so."

"You see," said Ukridge, "I dislike subterfuge."

There seemed no possibility of his beating this, so I left the man and resumed my researches.

AFTER this I was out of town for a few weeks, taking my annual vacation. When I got back to Ebury Street, Bowles, my landlord, after complimenting me in a stately way on my sunburned appearance, informed me that George Tupper had called several times while I was away.

"Appeared remarkably anxious to see you, sir."

I was surprised at this. George Tupper was always glad—or seemed to be glad—to see an old school friend when I called upon him, but he rarely sought me out in my home.

"Did he say what he wanted?"

"No, sir. He left no message. He merely inquired as to the probable date of your return and expressed a desire that you would visit him as soon as convenient."

"I'd better go and see him now."

"It might be advisable, sir."

I found George Tupper at the Foreign Office, surrounded by important-looking papers.

"Here you are at last!" cried George, resentfully, it seemed to me. "I thought you were never coming back."

"I had a splendid time, thanks very much for asking," I replied. "Got the roses back to my cheeks."

George, who seemed far from his usual tranquil self, briefly cursed my cheeks and their roses.

"Look here," he said, urgently, "something's got to be done. Have you seen Ukridge yet?"

"Not yet. I thought I would look him up this evening."

"You'd better. Do you know what has happened? That poor ass has gone and got himself engaged to be married to a girl at Clapham!"

"What?"

"Engaged! Girl at Clapham! Clapham Common," added George Tupper, as if in his opinion that made the matter even worse.

"You're joking!"

"I'm not joking," said George, peevishly. "Do I look as if I were joking? I met him in Battersea Park with her, and he introduced me. She reminded me," said George Tupper, shivering slightly, for that fearful evening had seared his soul deeply, "of that ghastly female in pink he brought with him the night I gave you two dinner at the Regent Grill—the one who talked at the top of her voice all the time about her aunt's stomach-trouble."

Here I think he did Miss Price an injustice. She had struck me during our brief acquaintance as something of a blister, but I had never quite classed her with Battling Billson's Flossie.

"Well, what do you want me to do?" I asked, not, I think, unreasonably.

"You've got to think of some way of getting him out of it. I can't do anything. I'm busy all day."

"So am I busy."

"Busy my left foot!" said George Tupper, who in moments of strong emotion was apt to relapse into the phraseology of school days and express himself in a very un-Foreign Official manner. "About once a week you work up energy enough to write a rotten article for some rag of a paper on 'Should Curates Kiss?' or some silly subject, and the rest of the time you loaf about with Ukridge. It's obviously your job to disentangle the poor idiot."

"But how do you know he wants to be disentangled? It seems to me you're jumping pretty readily to conclusions. It's all very well for you bloodless officials to sneer at the holy passion, but it's love, as I sometimes say, that makes the world go round. Ukridge probably feels that until now he never realized what true happiness could mean."

"Does he?" snorted George Tupper. "Well, he didn't look it when I met him. He looked like—well, do you remember when he went in for the heavyweights at school and that chap in Seymour's house hit him in the wind in the first round? That's how he looked when he was introducing the girl to me."

I am bound to say the comparison impressed me. It is odd how these little incidents of one's boyhood linger in the memory. Across the years I could see Ukridge now, half doubled up, one gloved hand caressing his diaphragm, a stunned and horrified bewilderment in his eyes. If his bearing as an engaged man had reminded George Tupper of that occasion, it certainly did seem as if the time had come for his friends to rally round him.

"You seem to have taken on the job of acting as a sort of unofficial keeper to the man," said George. "You'll have to help him now."

"Well, I'll go and see him."

"The whole thing is too absurd," said George Tupper. "How can Ukridge get married to anyone? He hasn't a bob in the world."

"I'll point that out to him. He's probably overlooked it."

IT was my custom when I visited Ukridge at his lodgings to stand underneath his window and bellow his name—upon which, if at home and receiving, he would lean out and drop me down his latchkey, thus avoiding troubling his landlady to come up from the basement to open the door. A very judicious proceeding, for his relations with that autocrat were usually in a somewhat strained condition. I bellowed now, and his head popped out.

"Hullo, laddie!"

It seemed to me, even at this long range, that there was something peculiar about his face, but it was not till I had climbed the stairs to his room that I was able to be certain. I then perceived that he had somehow managed to acquire a black eye, which, though past its first bloom, was still of an extraordinary richness.

"Great Scott!" I cried, staring at this decoration. "How and when?"

Ukridge drew at his pipe moodily.

"It's a long story," he said. "Do you remember some people named Price at Clapham——"

"You aren't going to tell me your *fiancée* has biffed you in the eye already?"

"Have you heard?" said Ukridge, surprised. "Who told you I was engaged?"

"George Tupper. I've just been seeing him."

"Oh, well, that saves a lot of explanation. Laddie," said Ukridge, solemnly, "let this be a warning to you. Never——"

I wanted facts, not moralizings.

"How did you get the eye?" I interrupted.

Ukridge blew out a cloud of smoke and his other eye glowed sombrely.

"That was Ernie Finch," he said, in a cold voice.

"Who is Ernie Finch? I've never heard of him."

"He's a sort of friend of the family, and as far as I can make out was going rather strong as regards Mabel till I came along. When we got engaged he was away, and no one apparently thought it worth while to tell him about it, and he came along one night and found me kissing her good-bye in the front garden. Observe how these things work out, Corky. The sight of him coming along suddenly gave Mabel a start, and she screamed; the fact that she screamed gave this man Finch a totally wrong angle on the situation; and this caused him, blast him, to rush up, yank off my glasses with one hand, and hit me with the other right in the eye. And before I could get at him the family were roused by Mabel's screeches and came out and separated us and explained that I was engaged to Mabel. Of course, when he heard that, the man apologized. And I wish you could have seen the beastly smirk he gave when he was doing it. Then there was a bit of a row and old Price forbade him the house. A fat lot of good that was! I've had to stay indoors ever since waiting for the colour-scheme to dim a bit."

"Of course," I urged, "one can't help being sorry for the chap in a way."

"*I* can," said Ukridge, emphatically. "I've reached the conclusion that there is not room in this world for Ernie Finch and

myself, and I'm living in the hope of meeting him one of these nights down in a dark alley."

"You sneaked his girl," I pointed out.

"I don't want his beastly girl," said Ukridge, with ungallant heat.

"Then you really do want to get out of this thing?"

"Of course I want to get out of it."

"But, if you feel like that, how on earth did you ever let it happen?"

"I simply couldn't tell you, old horse," said Ukridge, frankly. "It's all a horrid blur. The whole affair was the most ghastly shock to me. It came absolutely out of a blue sky. I had never so much as suspected the possibility of such a thing. All I know is that we found ourselves alone in the drawing-room after Sunday supper, and all of a sudden the room became full of Prices of every description babbling blessings. And there I was!"

"But you must have given them something to go on."

"I was holding her hand. I admit that."

"Ah!"

"Well, my gosh, I don't see why there should have been such a fuss about that. What does a bit of hand-holding amount to? The whole thing, Corky my boy, boils down to the question, Is any man safe? It's got so nowadays," said Ukridge, with a strong sense of injury, "that you've only to throw a girl a kindly word, and the next thing you know you're in the Lord Warden Hotel at Dover, picking the rice out of your hair."

"Well, you must own that you were asking for it. You rolled up in a new Daimler and put on enough dog for half-a-dozen millionaires. And you took the family for rides, didn't you?"

"Perhaps a couple of times."

"And talked about your aunt, I expect, and how rich she was?"

"I may have touched on my aunt occasionally."

"Well, naturally these people thought you were sent from heaven. The wealthy son-in-law." Ukridge projected himself from the depths sufficiently to muster up the beginnings of a faint smile of gratification at the description. Then his troubles swept him back again. "All you've got to do, if you want to get out of it, is to confess to them that you haven't a bob."

"But, laddie, that's the difficulty. It's a most unfortunate thing, but, as it happens, I am on the eve of making an immense fortune, and I'm afraid I hinted as much to them from time to time."

"What do you mean?"

"Since I saw you last I've put all my money in a bookmaker's business."

"How do you mean—all your money? Where did you get any money?"

"You haven't forgotten the fifty quid I made selling tickets for my aunt's dance? And then I collected a bit more here and there out of some judicious bets. So there it is. The firm is in a small way at present, but with the world full of mugs shoving and jostling one another to back losers, the thing is a potential gold-mine, and I'm a sleeping partner. It's no good my trying to make these people believe I'm hard up. They would simply laugh in my face and rush off and start breach-of-promise actions. Upon my Sam, it's a little hard! Just when I have my foot firmly planted on the ladder of success, this has to happen." He brooded in silence for awhile. "There's just one scheme that occurred to me," he said at length. "Would you have any objection to writing an anonymous letter?"

"What's the idea?"

"I was just thinking that, if you were to write them an anonymous letter, accusing me of all sorts of things—— Might say I was married already."

"Not a bit of good."

"Perhaps you're right," said Ukridge, gloomily, and after a few minutes more of thoughtful silence I left him. I was standing on the front steps when I heard him clattering down the stairs.

"Corky, old man!"

"Hullo?"

"I think I've got it," said Ukridge, joining me on the steps. "Came to me in a flash a second ago. How would it be if someone were to go down to Clapham and pretend to be a detective making inquiries about me? Dashed sinister and mysterious, you know. A good deal of meaning nods and shakes of the head. Give the impression that I was wanted for something or other. You get the idea? You would ask a lot of questions and take notes in a book——"

"How do you mean—*I* would?"

Ukridge looked at me in pained surprise.

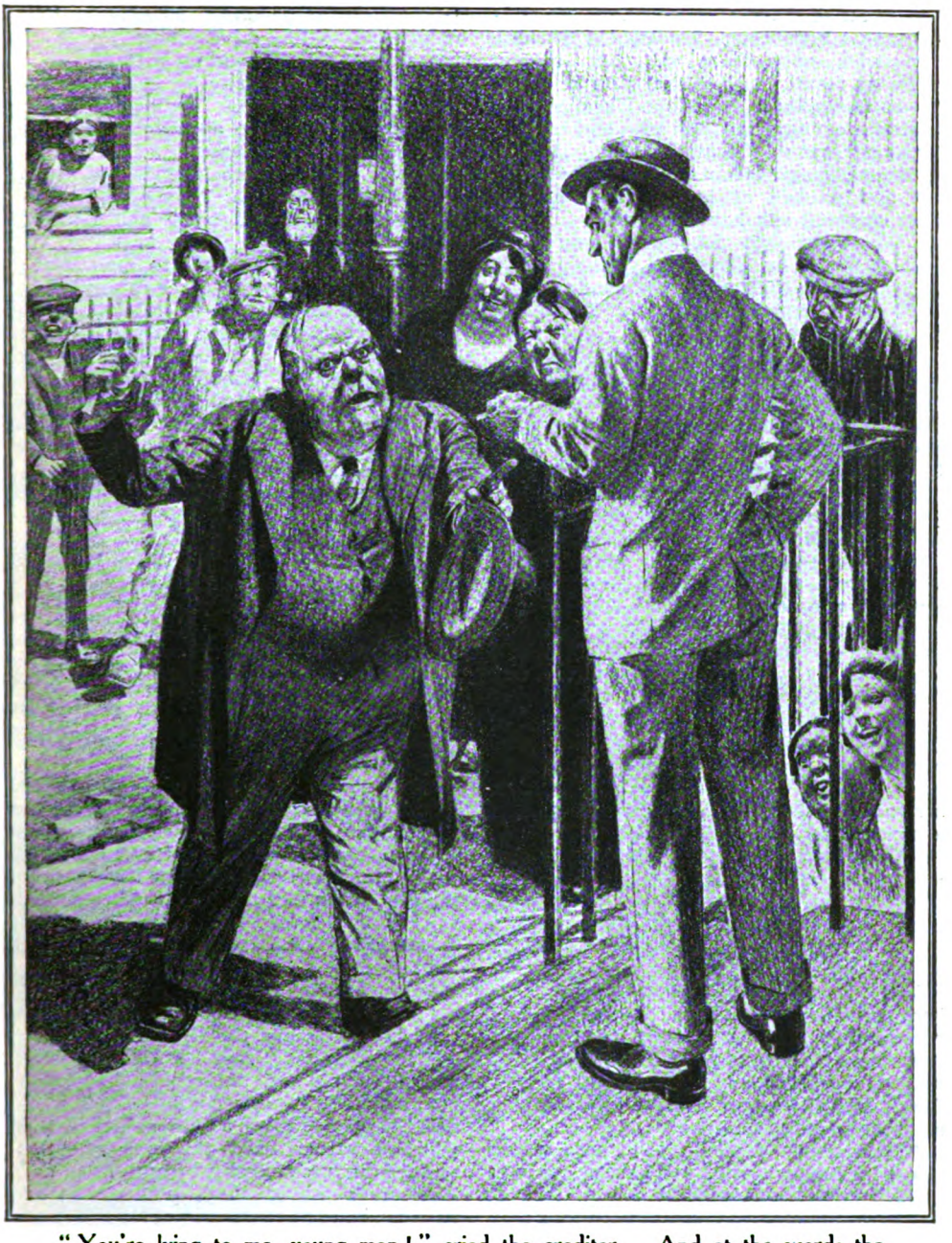
"Surely, old horse, you wouldn't object to doing a trifling service like this for an old friend?"

"I would, strongly. And in any case, what would be the use of my going? They've seen me."

"Yes, but they wouldn't recognize you. Yours," said Ukridge, ingratiatingly, "is an ordinary, meaningless sort of face. Or one of those theatrical costumier people would fit you out with a disguise——"

"No!" I said, firmly. "I'm willing to do anything in reason to help you out of this mess, but I refuse to wear false whiskers for you or anyone."

"All right, then," said Ukridge, despond-



"You're lying to me, young man!" cried the creditor. And at the words the street seemed suddenly to wake from slumber.

ently; "in that case, there's nothing to be——"

At this moment he disappeared. It was so swiftly done that he seemed to have been snatched up to heaven. Only the searching odour of his powerful tobacco lingered to remind me that he had once been at my side, and only the slam of the front door told me where he had gone. I looked about, puzzled to account for this abrupt departure, and as I did so heard galloping footsteps and perceived a stout, bearded

gentleman of middle age, clad in a frock-coat and a bowler hat. He was one of those men who, once seen, are not readily forgotten; and I recognized him at once. It was the creditor, the bloke Ukridge owed a bit of money to, the man who had tried to board our car in the Haymarket. Halting on the pavement below me, he removed the hat and dabbed at his forehead with a large coloured silk handkerchief.

"Was that Mr. Smallweed you were talking to?" he demanded, gustily. He was obviously touched in the wind.

"No," I replied, civilly. "No. Not Mr. Smallweed."

"You're lying to me, young man!" cried the creditor, his voice rising in a too-familiar shout. And at the words, as if they had been some magic spell, the street seemed suddenly to wake from slumber. It seethed with human life. Maids popped out of windows, areas disgorged landladies, the very stones seemed to belch forth excited spectators. I found myself the centre of attraction—and, for some reason which was beyond me, cast for the *rôle* of the villain of the drama. What I had actually done to the poor old man, nobody appeared to know; but the school of thought which held that I had picked his pocket and brutally assaulted him had the largest number of adherents, and there was a good deal of informal talk of lynching me. Fortunately a young man in a blue flannel suit, who had been one of the earliest arrivals on the scene, constituted himself a peacemaker.

"Come along, o' man," he said, soothingly, his arm weaving itself into that of the fermenting creditor. "You don't want to make yourself conspicuous, do you?"

"In there!" roared the creditor, pointing at the door.

The crowd seemed to recognize that there had been an error in its diagnosis. The prevalent opinion now was that I had kidnapped the man's daughter and was holding her prisoner behind that sinister door. The movement in favour of lynching me became almost universal.

"Now, now!" said the young man, whom I was beginning to like more every minute.

"I'll kick the door in!"

"Now, now! You don't want to go doing anything silly or foolish," pleaded the peacemaker. "There'll be a policeman along before you know where you are, and you'll look foolish if he finds you kicking up a silly row."

I MUST say that, if I had been in the bearded one's place and had had right so indisputably on my side, this argument would not have influenced me greatly, but I suppose respectable citizens with a reputation to lose have different views on the importance of colliding with the police, however right they may be. The creditor's violence began to ebb. He hesitated. He was plainly trying to approach the matter in the light of pure reason.

"You know where the fellow lives," argued the young man. "See what I mean? Meantersay, you can come and find him whenever you like."

This, too, sounded thin to me. But it appeared to convince the injured man. He allowed himself to be led away, and presently, the star having left the stage, the drama ceased to attract. The audience melted away. Windows closed, areas emptied themselves, and presently the street was given over once more to the cat lunching in the gutter and the coster hymning his Brussels sprouts.

A hoarse voice spoke through the letter-box.

"Has he gone, laddie?"

I put my mouth to the slit, and we talked together like Pyramus and Thisbe

"Yes."

"You're sure?"

"Certain."

"He isn't lurking round the corner somewhere, waiting to pop out?"

"No. He's gone."

The door opened and an embittered Ukridge emerged.

"It's a little hard!" he said, querulously. "You would scarcely credit it, Corky, but all that fuss was about a measly one pound two and threepence for a rotten little clockwork man that broke the first time I wound it up. Absolutely the first time, old man! It's not as if it had been a tandem bicycle, an enlarging camera, a Kodak, and a magic lantern."

I could not follow him.

"Why should a clockwork man be a tandem bicycle and the rest of it?"

"It's like this," said Ukridge. "There was a bicycle and photograph shop down near where I lived a couple of years ago, and I happened to see a tandem bicycle there which I rather liked the look of. So I ordered it provisionally from this cove. Absolutely provisionally, you understand. Also an enlarging camera, a Kodak, and a magic lantern. The goods were to be delivered when I had made up my mind about them. Well, after about a week the fellow asks if there are any further particulars I want to learn before definitely buying the muck. I say I am considering the matter, and in the meantime will he be good enough to let me have that little clockwork man in his window which walks when wound up?"

"Well?"

"Well, damme," said Ukridge, aggrieved, 'it didn't walk. It broke the first time I tried to wind it. Then a few weeks went by and this bloke started to make himself dashed unpleasant. Wanted me to pay him money! I reasoned with the blighter. I said: 'Now, look here, my man, need we say any more about this? Really, I think you've come out of the thing extremely well. Which,' I said, 'would you rather be owed for? A clockwork man, or a tandem bicycle, an enlarging camera, a Kodak, and a magic lantern?' You'd think that would have been simple enough for the meanest intellect, but no, he continued to make a fuss, until finally I had to move out of the neighbourhood. Fortunately, I had given him a false name——"

"Why?"

"Just an ordinary business precaution," explained Ukridge.

"I see."

"I looked on the matter as closed. But ever since then he has been bounding out at me when I least expect him. Once, by gad, he nearly nailed me in the middle of the Strand, and I had to leg it like a hare up Burleigh Street and through Covent Garden. I'd have been collared to a certainty, only he tripped over a basket of potatoes. It's persecution, damme, that's what it is—persecution!"

"Why don't you pay the man?" I suggested.

"Corky, old horse," said Ukridge, with evident disapproval of these reckless fiscal methods, "talk sense. How can I pay the man? Apart from the fact that at this stage of my career it would be madness to start flinging money right and left, there's the principle of the thing!"

THE immediate result of this disturbing episode was that Ukridge, packing his belongings in a small suit-case and reluctantly disgorging a week's rent in lieu of notice, softly and silently vanished away from his own lodgings and came to dwell in mine, to the acute gratification of Bowles, who greeted his arrival with a solemn joy and brooded over him at dinner the first night like a father over a long-lost son. I had often given him sanctuary before in his hour of need, and he settled down with the easy smoothness of an old campaigner. He was good enough to describe my little place as a home from home, and said that he had half a mind to stay on and end his declining years there.

I cannot say that this suggestion gave me the rapturous pleasure it seemed to give Bowles, who nearly dropped the potato dish in his emotion; but still I must say that on the whole the man was not an exacting guest. His practice of never rising before lunch-time insured me those mornings of undisturbed solitude which are so necessary to the young writer if he is to give *Interesting Bits* of his best; and if I had work to do in the evenings he was always ready to toddle downstairs and smoke a pipe with Bowles, whom he seemed to find as congenial a companion as Bowles found him. His only defect, indeed, was the habit he had developed of looking in on me in my bedroom at all hours of the night to discuss some new scheme designed to relieve him of his honourable obligations to Miss Mabel Price, of Balbriggan, Peabody Road, Clapham Common. My outspoken remarks on this behaviour checked him for forty-eight hours, but at three o'clock on the Sunday morning that ended the first week of his visit light flashing out above my head told me that he was in again.

"I think, laddie," I heard a satisfied voice remark, as a heavy weight descended on my toes, "I think, laddie, that at last I have hit the bull's-eye and rung the bell. Hats off to Bowles, without whom I would never have got the idea. It was only when he told me the plot of that story he is reading that I began to see daylight. Listen, old man," said Ukridge, settling himself more comfortably on my feet, "and tell me if you don't think I am on to a good thing. About a couple of days before Lord Claude Tremaine was to marry Angela Bracebridge, the most beautiful girl in London——"

"What the devil are you talking about? And do you know what the time is?"

"Never mind the time, Corky my boy. To-morrow is the day of rest and you can sleep on till an advanced hour. I was telling you the plot of this Primrose Novelette thing that Bowles is reading."

"You haven't woken me up at three in the morning to tell me the plot of a rotten novelette!"

"You haven't been listening, old man," said Ukridge, with gentle reproach. "I was saying that it was this plot that gave me my big idea. To cut it fairly short, as you seem in a strange mood, this Lord Claude bloke, having had a rummy pain in his left side, went to see a doctor a couple of days before the wedding, and the doc. gave him the start of his young life by telling him that he had only six months to live. There's a lot more of it, of course, and in the end it turns out that the fool of a doctor was all wrong; but what I'm driving at is that this development absolutely put the bee on the wedding. Everybody sympathized with Claude and said it was out of the question that he could dream of getting married. So it suddenly occurred to me, laddie, that here was the scheme of a

lifetime. I'm going to supper at Balbriggan to-morrow, and what I want you to do is simply to——"

"You can stop right there," I said, with emotion. "I know what you want me to do. You want me to come along with you, disguised in a top-hat and a stethoscope, and explain to these people that I am a Harley Street specialist, and have been sounding you and have discovered that you are in the last stages of heart-disease."

"Nothing of the kind, old man, nothing of the kind. I wouldn't dream of asking you to do anything like that."

"Yes, you would, if you had happened to think of it."

"Well, as a matter of fact, since you mention it," said Ukridge, thoughtfully, "it wouldn't be a bad scheme. But if you don't feel like taking it on——"

"I don't."

"Well, then, all I want you to do is to come to Balbriggan at about nine. Supper will be over by then. No sense," said Ukridge, thoughtfully, "in missing supper. Come to Balbriggan at about nine, ask for me, and tell me in front of the gang that my aunt is dangerously ill."

"What's the sense in that?"

"You aren't showing that clear, keen intelligence of which I have often spoken so highly, Corky. Don't you see? The news is a terrible shock to me. It bowls me over. I clutch at my heart——"

"They'll see through it in a second."

"I ask for water——"

"Ah, that's a convincing touch. That'll make them realize you aren't yourself."

"And after awhile we leave. In fact, we leave as quickly as we jolly well can. You see what happens? I have established the fact that my heart is weak, and in a few days I write and say I've been looked over and the wedding must unfortunately be off because——"

"Damned silly idea!"

"Corky my boy," said Ukridge, gravely, "to a man as up against it as I am no idea is silly that looks as if it might work. Don't you think this will work?"

"Well, it might, of course," I admitted.

"Then I shall have a dash at it. I can rely on you to do your part?"

"How am I supposed to know that your aunt is ill?"

"Perfectly simple. They 'phoned from her house, and you are the only person who knows where I'm spending the evening."

"And will you swear that this is really all you want me to do?"

"Absolutely all."

"No getting me there and letting me in for something foul?"

"My dear old man!"

"All right," I said. "I feel in my bones that something's going to go wrong, but I suppose I've got to do it."

"Spoken like a true friend," said Ukridge.

At nine o'clock on the following evening I stood on the steps of Balbriggan waiting for my ring at the bell to be answered. Cats prowled furtively in the purple dusk, and from behind a lighted window on the ground floor of the house came the tinkle of a piano and the sound of voices raised in one of the more mournful types of hymn. I recognized Ukridge's above the rest. He was expressing with a vigour which nearly cracked the glass a desire to be as a little child washed clean of sin, and it somehow seemed to deepen my already substantial gloom. Long experience of Ukridge's ingenious schemes had given me a fatalistic feeling with regard to them. With whatever fair prospects I started out to co-operate with him on these occasions, I almost invariably found myself entangled sooner or later in some nightmare imbroglio.

The door opened. A maid appeared.

"Is Mr. Ukridge here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Could I see him for a moment?"

I followed her into the drawing-room.

"Gentleman to see Mr. Ukridge, please," said the maid, and left me to do my stuff.

I was aware of a peculiar feeling. It was a sort of dry-mouthed panic, and I suddenly recognized it as the same helpless stage-fright which I had experienced years before on the occasion when, the old place presumably being short of talent, I had been picked on to sing a solo at the annual concert at school. I gazed upon the roomful of Prices, and words failed me. Near the bookshelf against the wall was a stuffed seagull of blackguardly aspect, suspended with outstretched wings by a piece of string. It had a gaping gamboge beak and its eye was bright and sardonic. I found myself gazing at it in a hypnotized manner. It seemed to see through me at a glance.

It was Ukridge who came to the rescue. Incredibly at his ease in this frightful room, he advanced to welcome me, resplendent in a morning-coat, patent-leather shoes, and tie, all of which I recognized as my property. As always when he looted my wardrobe, he exuded wealth and respectability.

"Want to see me, laddie?"

His eye met mine meaningly, and I found speech. We had rehearsed this little scene with a good deal of care over the luncheon-table, and the dialogue began to come back to me. I was able to ignore the seagull and proceed.

"Listen, old man," said Ukridge, settling himself more comfortably on my feet, "and tell me if you don't think I am on to a good thing."

"I'm afraid I have serious news, old man," I said, in a hushed voice.

"Serious news?" said Ukridge, trying to turn pale.

"Serious news!"

I had warned him during rehearsals that this was going to sound uncommonly like a vaudeville cross-talk act of the Argumentative College Chums type, but he had ruled out the objection as far-fetched. Nevertheless, that is just what it did sound like, and I found myself blushing warmly.

"What is it?" demanded Ukridge, emotionally, clutching me by the arm in a grip like the bite of a horse.

"Ouch!" I cried. "Your aunt!"

"My aunt?"

"They telephoned from the house just

now," I proceeded, warming to my work, "to say that she had had a relapse. Her condition is very serious. They want you there at once. Even now it may be too late."

"Water!" said Ukridge, staggering back and clawing at his waistcoat—or rather at my waistcoat, which I had foolishly omitted to lock up. "Water!"

room, but a horde of juvenile Prices immediately rushed off in quest of some, and meanwhile the rest of the family gathered about the stricken man, solicitous and sympathetic.

"My aunt! Ill!" moaned Ukridge.

"I shouldn't worry, o' man," said a voice at the door.

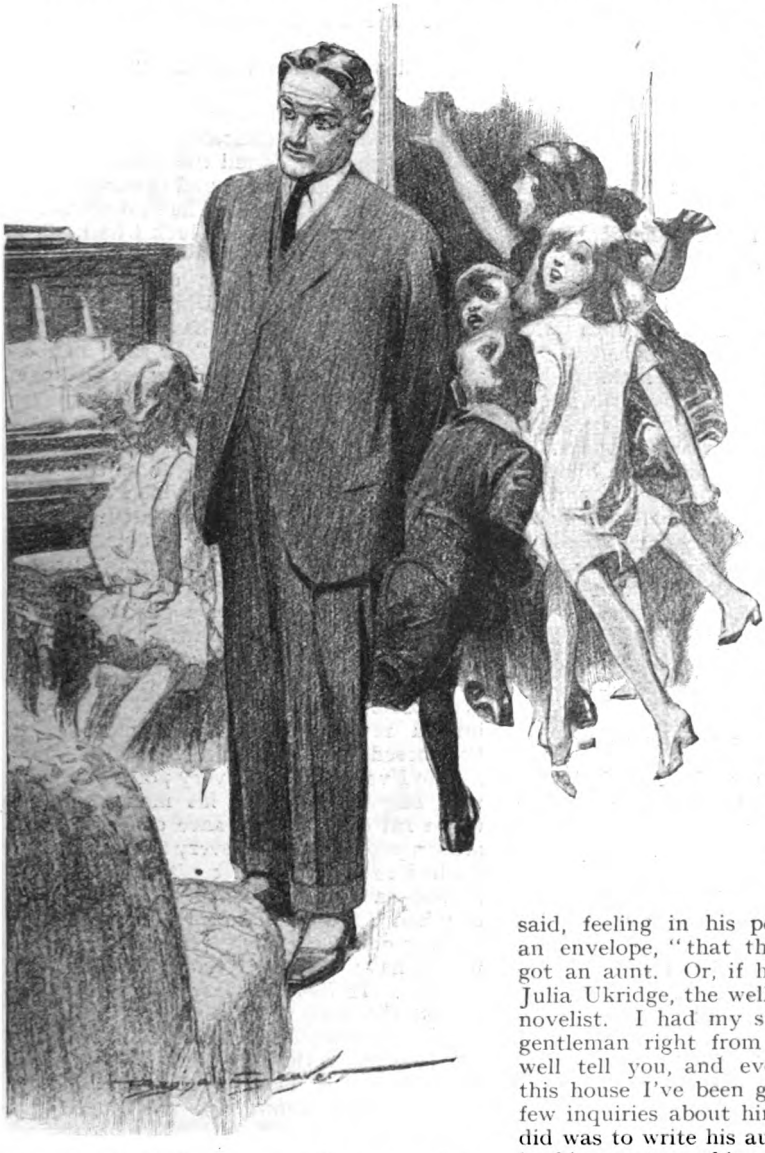
It was well done. Even I, much as I wished that he would stop wrenching one of my best ties all out of shape, was obliged to admit that. I suppose it was his lifelong training in staggering under the blows of Fate that made him so convincing. The Price family seemed to be shaken to its foundations. There was no water in the

So sneering and altogether unpleasant was this voice that for a moment I almost thought that it must have been the seagull that had spoken. Then, turning, I perceived a young man in a blue flannel suit. A young man whom I had seen before. It was the Peacemaker, the fellow who had soothed and led away

the infuriated bloke to whom Ukridge owed a bit of money.

"I shouldn't worry," he said again, and looked malevolently upon Ukridge. His advent caused a sensation. Mr. Price, who had been kneading Ukridge's shoulder with a strong man's silent sympathy, towered as majestically as his five feet six would permit him.

"Mr. Finch," he said, "may I inquire what you are doing in my house?"



ties all out of shape, was obliged to admit Fate that made him so convincing.

"All right, all right——"

"I thought I told you——"

"All right, all right," repeated Ernie Finch, who appeared to be a young man of character. "I've only come to expose an impostor."

"Impostor!"

"Him!" said young Mr. Finch, pointing a scornful finger at Ukridge.

I think Ukridge was about to speak, but he seemed to change his mind. As for me, I had edged out of the centre of things, and was looking on as inconspicuously as I could from behind a red plush sofa. I wished to disassociate myself entirely from the proceedings.

"Ernie Finch," said Mrs. Price, swelling, "what do you mean?"

The young man seemed in no way discouraged by the general atmosphere of hostility. He twirled his small moustache and smiled a frosty smile.

"I mean," he said, feeling in his pocket and producing an envelope, "that this fellow here hasn't got an aunt. Or, if he has, she isn't Miss Julia Ukridge, the well-known and wealthy novelist. I had my suspicions about this gentleman right from the first, I may as well tell you, and ever since he came to this house I've been going round making a few inquiries about him. The first thing I did was to write his aunt—the lady he says is his aunt—making out I wanted her nephew's address, me being an old school chum of his. Here's what she writes back—you can see it for yourselves if you want to: 'Miss Ukridge acknowledges receipt of Mr. Finch's letter, and in reply wishes to state that she has no nephew.' No nephew! That's plain enough, isn't it?" He raised a hand to check comment. "And here's another thing," he proceeded. "That motor-car he's been swanking about in. It doesn't belong to him at all. It belongs to

a man named Fillimore. I noted the number and made investigations. This fellow's name isn't Ukridge at all. It's Smallweed. He's a penniless impostor, who's been pulling all your legs from the moment he came into the house; and if you let Mabel marry him you'll be making the biggest bloomer of your lives!"

There was an awestruck silence. Price looked upon Price in dumb consternation.

"I don't believe you," said the master of the house at length, but he spoke without conviction.

"Then, perhaps," retorted Ernie Finch, "you'll believe this gentleman. Come in, Mr. Grindlay."

Bearded, frock-coated, and sinister beyond words, the Creditor stalked into the room.

"You tell 'em," said Ernie Finch.

The Creditor appeared more than willing. He fixed Ukridge with a glittering eye, and his bosom heaved with pent-up emotion.

"Sorry to intrude on a family on Sunday evening," he said, "but this young man told me I should find Mr. Smallweed here, so I came along. I've been hunting for him high and low for two years and more about a matter of one pound two and threepence for goods supplied."

"He owes you money?" faltered Mr. Price.

"He bilked me," said the Creditor, precisely.

"Is this true?" said Mr. Price, turning to Ukridge.

Ukridge had risen and seemed to be wondering whether it was possible to sidle unobserved from the room. At this question he halted, and a weak smile played about his lips.

"Well——" said Ukridge.

The head of the family pursued his examination no further. His mind appeared to be made up. He had weighed the evidence and reached a decision. His eyes flashed. He raised a hand and pointed to the door.

"Leave my house!" he thundered.

"Right-o!" said Ukridge, mildly.

"And never enter it again!"

"Right-o!" said Ukridge.

Mr. Price turned to his daughter.

"Mabel," he said, "this engagement of yours is broken. Broken, do you understand? I forbid you ever to see this scoundrel again. You hear me?"

"All right, pa," said Miss Price, speaking for the first and last time. She seemed to be of a docile and equable disposition. I fancied I caught a not-displeased glance on its way to Ernie Finch.

"And now, sir," cried Mr. Price, "go!"

"Right-o!" said Ukridge.

But here the Creditor struck a business note.

"And what," he inquired, "about my one pound two and threepence?"

It seemed for a moment that matters were about to become difficult. But Ukridge, ever ready-witted, found the solution.

"Have you got one pound two and threepence on you, old man?" he said to me.

And with my usual bad luck I had.

WE walked together down Peabody Road. Already Ukridge's momentary discomfiture had passed.

"It just shows, laddie," he said, exuberantly, "that one should never despair. However black the outlook, old horse, never, never despair. That scheme of mine might or might not have worked—one cannot tell. But, instead of having to go to all the bother of subterfuge, to which I always object, here we have a nice, clean-cut solution of the thing without any trouble at all." He mused happily for a moment. "I never thought," he said, "that the time would come when I would feel a gush of kindly feeling towards Ernie Finch; but, upon my Sam, laddie, if he were here now, I would embrace the fellow. Clasp him to my bosom, dash it!" He fell once more into a reverie. "Amazing, old horse," he proceeded, "how things work out. Many a time I've been on the very point of paying that blighter Grindlay his money, merely to be rid of the annoyance of having him always popping up, but every time something seemed to stop me. I can't tell you what it was—a sort of feeling. Almost as if one had a guardian angel at one's elbow guiding one. My gosh, just think where I would have been if I had yielded to the impulse. It was Grindlay blowing in that turned the scale. By gad, Corky my boy, this is the happiest moment of my life."

"It might be the happiest of mine," I said, churlishly, "if I thought I should ever see that one pound two and threepence again."

"Now, laddie, laddie," protested Ukridge, "these are not the words of a friend. Don't mar a moment of unalloyed gladness. Don't you worry, you'll get your money back. A thousandfold!"

"When?"

"One of these days," said Ukridge, buoyantly. "One of these days."

(Another story by P. G. Wodehouse will appear next month.)

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER IV.

THE VOYAGE TO WEST AFRICA.

IT had always been my intention to take a voyage as ship's surgeon when I had taken my degree, as I could in this way see something of the world, and at the same time earn a little of the money which I so badly needed if I were ever to start in practice for myself. When a man is in the very early twenties he will not be taken seriously as a practitioner, and, though I looked old for my age, it was clear that I had to fill in my time in some other way. My plans were all exceedingly fluid, and I was ready to join Army, Navy, Indian Service, or anything which offered an opening. I had no reason to think that I would find a billet upon a passenger ship, and had nearly forgotten that I had my name down when I suddenly received a telegram telling me to come to Liverpool and to take medical charge of the African Steam Navigation Company's *Mayumba*, bound for the West Coast. In a week I was there, and on October 22nd, 1881, we started on our voyage.

The *Mayumba* was a trim little steamer of about four thousand tons—a giant after my experience in the two-hundred-ton whaler. She was built for commerce, carrying mixed cargoes to the Coast and coming back with palm oil in puncheons, palm nuts in bulk, ivory, and other tropical products. What with whale oil and palm oil there certainly seemed to be something greasy about my horoscope. There was room for twenty or thirty passengers, and it was for their behoof that I was paid some twelve pounds a month.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

It was well that we were seaworthy, for we put out in a violent gale, which became so bad as we emerged from the Mersey that we were forced into Holyhead for the night. Next day in vile and thick weather, with a strong sea running, we made our way down the Irish Sea. I shall always believe that I may have saved the ship from disaster, for as I was standing near the officer of the watch I suddenly caught sight of a lighthouse standing out in a rift in the fog. It was on the port bow, and I could not imagine how any lighthouse could be on the port side of a ship which was, as I knew, well down on the Irish coast. I hate to be an alarmist, so I simply touched the mate's sleeve, pointed to the dim outline of the lighthouse, and said: "Is that all right?" He fairly jumped as his eye lit upon it, and he gave a yell to the men at the wheel and rang a violent signal to the engine-room. The lighthouse, if I remember right, was the Tuskar, and we were heading right into a rocky promontory which was concealed by the rain and fog.

I have been lucky in my captains, for Captain Gordon Wallace was one of the best, and we have kept in touch during the later years. Our passengers were mostly

Copyright, 1923 by A. Conan Doyle.

for Madeira, but there were some pleasant ladies bound for the Coast, and some unpleasant negro traders whose manners and bearing were objectionable, but who were patrons of the line and must, therefore, be tolerated. Some of these palm-oil chiefs and traders have incomes of many thousands a year, but as they have no cultivated tastes they can only spend their money on drink, debauchery, and senseless extravagance.

The storms followed us all the way down the Channel and across the Bay, which is normal, I suppose, at such a time of year. Everyone was seasick, so as doctor I had some work to do. However, before we reached Madeira we ran into fine weather and all our troubles were soon forgotten. One never realizes the comfort of a dry deck until one has been ankle-deep for a week. I missed the sea-boots and rough-and-ready dress of the whaler, for when one is in blue serge and gilt buttons one does not care to take a ducking. Just as we thought, however, that we were all right a worse gale than ever broke over us, the wind luckily being behind us, so that it helped us on our way. With jib, trysail, and main staysail, which was as much as we could stand, we lurched and staggered, swept every now and then by the big Atlantic combers, which were phosphorescent at night, so that flames of liquid fire came coursing down the decks. Very glad we were when after a week of storm we saw the rugged peaks of Porto Sancto, an outlier of Madeira, and finally came to anchor in Funchal Bay.

A LAND OF DEATH.

Teneriffe was our next stopping place, Santa Cruz being the port of call, and on November 9th we reached Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone—a lovely spot but a place of death. Here our ladies left us, and indeed it was sad to see them go, for female lives are even shorter than male upon the Coast. I speak of the days of malaria and black-water fever, before Ronald Ross and others had done their great work of healing and prevention. It was a truly dreadful place in the early 'eighties, and the despair which reigned in the hearts of the white people made them take liberties with alcohol which they would not have dared to take in a healthier place. A year's residence seemed to be about the limit of human endurance. I remember meeting one healthy-looking resident, who told me that he had been there three years. When I congratulated him he shook his head. "I am a doomed man. I have advanced Bright's disease," said he. One wondered whether the colonies were really worth the price we had to pay.

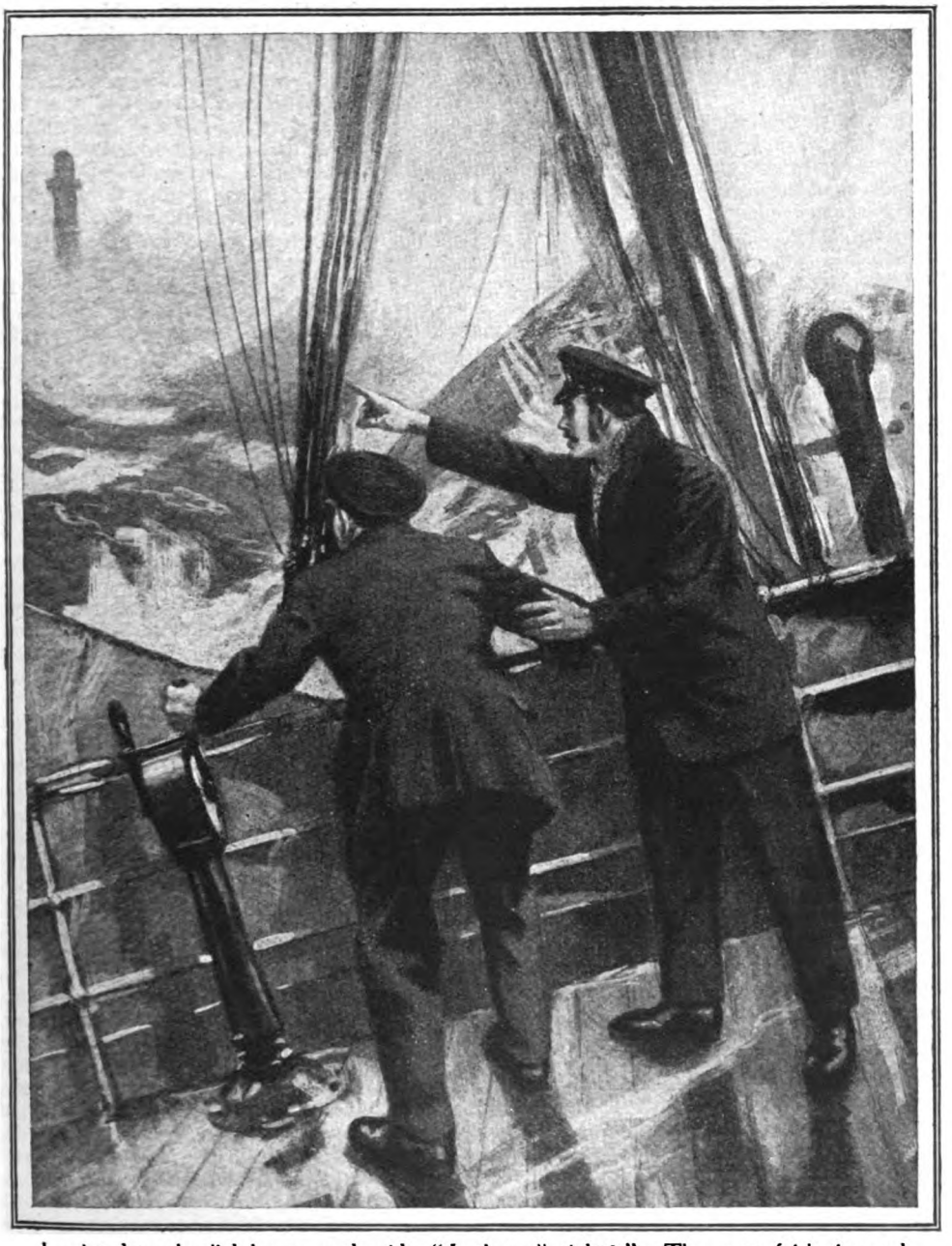
From Sierra Leone we steamed to Monrovia, the capital of the negro republic of Liberia, which, as the name implies, was founded mainly by escaped slaves. So far as I could see it was orderly enough, though all small communities which take themselves seriously have a comic aspect. Thus, at the time of the Franco-German War, Liberia is said to have sent out its single Customs boat, which represents its official Navy, and stopped the British mail-ship in order to send word to Europe that it did not intend to interfere in the matter.

It is a very monotonous view, for whether it is the Ivory Coast or the Gold Coast, or the Liberian shore, it always presents the same features—burning sunshine, a long swell breaking into a white line of surf, a margin of golden sand, and then the low green-bush, with an occasional palm tree rising above it. If you have seen a mile, you have seen a thousand. As I write now all these ports at which we stopped, Grand Bassam, Cape Palmas, Accra, Cape Coast Castle, all form the same picture in my mind.

This coast is dotted at night with native fires, some of them of great extent, arising no doubt from their habit of burning the grass. It is interesting that in Hanno's account of his journey down the coast—the only piece of Carthaginian literature which has reached us—he talks also of the fires which he saw at night. As he speaks of gorillas it is probable that he got as far as the Gaboon, or south of the line. He saw great volcanic activity, and the remains of it are still visible at Fernando Po, which is almost all volcanic. In Hanno's time, however, the hills were actually spouting fire, and the country was a sea of flame, so that he dare not set foot on shore. I have wondered sometimes whether the last cataclysm at Atlantis may not have been much later than we think. The account of Plato puts it at about 9000 B.C., but it may well have been a gradual thing and the last cataclysm have been that of which Hanno saw the traces. All this activity which he described is exactly opposite the spot where the old continent was supposed to have been.

SOME AMUSING INTERLUDES.

Our ships have rough and-ready ways as they jog down the coast. Once we moved on while one hundred native visitors were still on board. It was funny to see them dive off and make for their canoes. One of them had a tall hat, an umbrella, and a large coloured picture of the Saviour—all of which he had bought at the trading booths which the men rig in the forecastle. These impedimenta did not prevent him from swimming to his boat. At another minor



I pointed to the lighthouse, and said: "Is that all right?" The mate fairly jumped as his eye lit upon it, and he gave a yell to the men at the wheel.

port, since we were pressed for time, we simply threw our consignment of barrel staves overboard, knowing that soon or late they would wash up on the beach, though how the real owner could make good his claim to them I do not know. Occasionally the native scores in this game. Some years ago, before Ashantee was annexed by the French, the captain took the oil casks on board at Whydah by means of a long rope and a donkey engine, an ingenious way of avoiding the surf, which

came to a sudden stop when a company of the famous Amazons appeared and threatened to fire upon the ship if they did not pay their dues to the surf boats in the ordinary fashion.

I had myself to pay my dues to the climate, for on November 18th I find an eloquent gap in my diary. We had reached Lagos, and there, rolling in a greasy swell off that huge lagoon, the germ or the mosquito or whatever it was reached me and I was down with a very sharp fever. I remember staggering to my bunk and then all was blotted out. As I was myself doctor there was no one to look after me, and I lay for several days fighting it out with Death in a very small ring and without a second. It speaks well for my constitution that I came out a victor. I remember no psychic experience, no visions, no fears, nothing save a nightmare fog from which I emerged as weak as a child. It must have been a close call, and I had scarcely sat up before I heard that another victim who got it at the same time was dead.

UP THE BONNY RIVER.

A week later found me, convalescent and full of energy once more, up the Bonny river, which certainly never got its name from the Scottish adjective, for it is in all ways hateful, with its brown smelling stream and its mango swamps. The natives round were all absolute savages, offering up human sacrifices to sharks and crocodiles. The captain had heard the screams of the victims and seen them dragged down to the water's edge, while on another occasion he had seen the protruding skull of a man who had been buried in an ant-heap. It is all very well to make game of the missionaries, but how could such people ever be improved if it were not for the labours of devoted men ?

We called at Fernando Po, and later at Victoria, a lovely little settlement upon the main, with the huge peak of the Cameroons rising behind it. A dear homely Scots lassie was playing the part of missionary there, and if she did not evangelize she at least civilized, which is more important. It lies in a beautiful bay studded with islands and well-wooded all round. For some reason the whole style of the scenery changes completely here, and it is the more welcome after the thousand miles of monotony to the north. I went ashore at Victoria, and I cannot forget my thrill when what I thought was a good-sized blue bird passed me and I found that it was a butterfly.

To reach Old Calabar we had to steam for sixty miles up the Old Calabar river, the channel lying so near the shore that we brushed the trees on one side. I lay in wait with my rifle, but though I saw the swirl of several alligators none emerged. Old Calabar seemed the largest and most prosperous place we had visited, but here also the hand of Death was over all, and it was " eat, drink, and be merry " for the old and unsatisfactory reason. Here again we met one of those young lady pioneers of civilization. Civilization is the better, but it is a stern and dreadful call which summons a woman to such a work.

Getting a canoe, I ascended the river for several miles to a place called Creektown. Dark and terrible mangrove swamps lay on either side, with gloomy shades where nothing that is not horrible could exist. It is indeed a foul place. Once in an isolated tree, standing in a flood, I saw an evil-looking snake, worm-coloured and about three feet long. I shot him and saw him drift down stream. I learned later in life to give up killing animals, but I confess that I have no particular compunctions about that one. Creektown is in native territory, and the King sent down a peremptory order that we should report ourselves to him, but as it sounded ominous and might mean a long delay we got our paddles out, and were soon back in British waters.

I had a curious experience one morning. A large ribbon-shaped fish, about three or four feet long, came up and swam upon the surface near the ship. Having my gun handy I shot it. I don't think five seconds could have elapsed before another larger and thicker fish—a big catfish, I should say—darted up from the depths, seized the wounded fish by the middle, and dragged it down. So murderous is the food-search, and so keen the watch in Nature ! I saw something similar in the mixed tank of an aquarium once, where a fish stunned himself by swimming against the glass front, and was instantly seized and devoured by his neighbour. A strange fish to which I was introduced at Calabar was the electrical torpedo fish. It is handed to you in an earthenware saucer—a quiet little drab creature about five inches long—and you are asked to tickle its back. Then you learn exactly how high you can jump.

The death-like impression of Africa grew upon me. One felt that the white man with his present diet and habits was an intruder who was never meant to be there, and that the great sullen brown continent killed him as one crushes nits. I find in my diary :—

" Oh Africa, where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?
Better dwell in Old England on alms
Than be rich in that terrible place."

THE DANGER OF LUXURY.

The life aboard ship, however, was an easy and, in some ways, a luxurious one—too luxurious for a young man who had his way to make in the world. Premature comfort is a deadly enervating thing. I remember considering my own future—I stood upon the poop with a raging thunderstorm around me—and seeing very clearly that one or two more such voyages would sap my simple habits and make me unfit for the hard struggle which any sort of success would need. The idea of success in literature had never crossed my mind. It was still of medicine only that I thought, but I knew by my Birmingham experience how long and rough a path it was for those who had no influence and could not afford to buy. Then and there I vowed that I would wander no more, and that was surely one of the turning-points of my life. A "Wanderjahr" is good, but two "Wanderjahre" may mean damnation—and it is hard to stop. I find that on the same day of fruitful meditation I swore off alcohol for the rest of the voyage. I drank quite freely at this period of my life, having a head and a constitution which made me fairly immune, but my reason told me that the unbounded cocktails of West Africa were a danger, and with an effort I cut them out. There is a certain subtle pleasure in abstinence, and it is only socially that it is difficult. If we were all abstainers as a matter of course, like the real Mohammedans, none of us would ever miss it.

One of the natives had a tall hat, an umbrella, and a large coloured picture of the Saviour, but these impedimenta did not prevent him from swimming to his boat.

I did a mad thing at Cape Coast Castle, for, in a spirit either of bravado or pure folly, I swam round the ship—or at least for some length along her and back again. I suppose it was the consideration that black folk go freely into the water which induced me to do it. For some reason white folk do not share the same immunity. As I was drying myself on deck I saw the triangular back fin of a shark rise to the surface. Several times in my life I have

done utterly reckless things with so little motive that I have found it difficult to explain them to myself afterwards. This was one of them.

A LITERARY NEGRO.

The most intelligent and well-read man whom I met on the Coast was a negro, the American Consul at Monrovia. He came on with us as a passenger. My starved literary side was eager for good talk, and it was wonderful to sit on deck discussing Bancroft and Motley, and then suddenly realize that you were talking to one who had possibly been a slave himself, and was certainly the son of slaves. He had thought a good deal about African travel. "The only way to explore Africa is to go without arms and with few servants. You would not like it in England if a body of men came armed to the teeth and marched through your land. The Africans are quite as sensitive." It was the method of Livingstone as against the method of Stanley. The former takes the braver and better man.

This negro gentleman did me good, for a man's brain is an organ for the formation of his own thoughts and also for the digestion of other people's, and it needs fresh fodder. We had, of course, books aboard the ship, but neither many nor good. I cannot trace that I made any mental or spiritual advancement during the voyage, but I added one more experience to my chaplet, and I suppose it all goes to some ultimate result in character or personality. I was a strong, full-blooded young man, full of the joy of life, with nothing of what Oliver Wendell Holmes calls "pathological piety and tuberculous virtues." I was a man among men. I walked ever among pitfalls, and I thank all ministering angels that I came through, while I have a softened heart for those who did not.

OUR SHIP ON FIRE.

Our voyage home—oil-gathering from port to port on the same but reversed route—was uneventful until the very last stride, when just as we were past Madeira the ship took fire. Whether it was the combustion of coal dust or what has never been determined, but certainly the fire broke out in the bunkers, and as there was only a wooden partition between these bunkers and a cargo of oil we were in deadly danger. For the first day we took it lightly, as a mere smoulder, and for a second and third day we were content to seal the gratings as far as possible, to play down on it with the hose, and to shift the coal away from the oil. On the fourth morning, however, things took a sudden turn for the worse. I copy from my log book :—

"January 9th. I was waked up early in the morning by the purser, Tom King, poking his head in at my door and informing me that the ship was in a blaze, and that all hands had been called and were working down below. I got my clothes on, but when I came on deck nothing was to be seen of it save thick volumes of smoke from the bunker ventilators, and a lurid glow down below. I offered to go down, but there seemed to be as many working as could be fitted in. I was then asked to call the passengers. I waked each in turn, and they all faced the situation very bravely and coolly. One, a Swiss, sat up in his bunk, rubbed his eyes, and in answer to my remark, 'The ship is on fire!' said, 'I have often been on ships that were on fire.' 'Splendide mendax'—but a good spirit! All day we fought the flames, and the iron side of the ship was red-hot at one point. Boats are prepared and provisioned and no doubt at the worst we could row or sail them to Lisbon, where my dear sisters, now bravely governessing there, would be considerably surprised if their big brother walked in. However, we are getting the better of it, and by evening those ominous pillars of smoke were down to mere wisps. So ends an ugly business!"

On January 14th we were in Liverpool once more, and West Africa was but one more of the cinema reels of memory. It is, I am told, very much improved now in all things. My old friend and cricket companion, Sir Fred. Guggisberg, is Governor at Lagos, and has asked me to see the old ground under very different auspices. I wish I could, but the sands still run and there is much to be done.

CHAPTER V.

MY FIRST EXPERIENCES IN PRACTICE.

I HAVE now come to the temporary end of my voyages, which were to be renewed in years to come, and I have reached the time when, in very curious circumstances, I endeavoured to establish myself in medical practice. In a book written some years afterwards, called "The Stark Munro Letters," I drew in very close detail the events of the next few years, and there the curious reader will find them more clearly and fully set out than would be to scale in these pages. I would only remark, should any reader reconstruct me or my career from that book, that there are some

Once in an isolated tree, standing in a flood, I saw an evil-looking snake.
I shot him and saw him drift down stream.

few incidents there which are imaginary, and that, especially, the whole incident of the case of a lunatic and of Lord Saltire in Chapter IV. occurred to a friend and not to myself. Otherwise the whole history of my association with the man whom I called Cullingworth, his extraordinary character, our parting, and the way in which I was left to what seemed certain ruin, were all as depicted. I will here simply give the essentials of the story.

In my last year of study at Edinburgh I formed a friendship with a remarkable student named George Budd. He came of a famous medical family, his father having been the first to draw the distinction between typhus and typhoid. He came also of a famous athletic stock, and was a great Rugby forward himself, though rather handicapped by the Berserk fury with which he would play. He was up to international form, and his younger brother, Arthur Budd, was reckoned by good judges to be about the best forward who ever donned the rose-embroidered jersey of England.

Budd was as strong mentally as physically. In person he was about five-foot-nine in height, perfectly built, with a bulldog jaw, bloodshot, deep-set eyes, overhanging brows, and yellowish hair as stiff as wire, which spurted up above his brows. He was a man born for trouble and adventure, unconventional in his designs and formidable in his powers of execution—a man of action with a big but incalculable brain guiding the action. He died in early middle-age, and I understand that an autopsy revealed some cerebral abnormality, so that there was no doubt a pathological element in his strange explosive character. For some reason he took a fancy to me, and appeared to attach an undue importance to my advice.

A STRANGE HONEYMOON.

When I met him first he had just indulged in one of his wild escapades, which ended usually in a fight or in a transitory appearance in a police-court, but on this occasion was more serious and permanent. He had run off with a charming young lady and married her, she being a ward in Chancery and under age. However, the deed was done, and all the lawyers in the world could not undo it, though they might punish the culprit. He told me how he and the lady had gone over a Bradshaw with the intention that when they came on a station of which neither of them had ever heard, they would make for that place and spend their honeymoon there. They came, therefore, upon some awful name, Clodpole-in-the-Marsh or something of the kind, and there they sojourned in the village inn. Budd stained his yellow hair black, but the stain took in some places and not in others, so that he looked as if he had escaped from Barnum's show. What Clodpole-in-the-Marsh could have thought of such an extraordinary couple I cannot imagine, and it is probably the one occasion on which it ever buzzed. I cannot think of any surer way of getting publicity than that which Budd took to avoid detection. In London they would have been perfectly unobserved. I remember that for years Budd's hair presented curious iridescent tints which were the remains of his disguise.

He brought his bride safely to Edinburgh, where they hired a flat and lived in it without furnishing it save for the absolutely needful. I have dined with them there on an apple dumpling, seated on a pile of thick volumes, as there was no chair. We introduced them to a few friends, did what we could for the lonely lady, and finally they drifted off and for a time we heard no more.

Just before I started for Africa I got a long telegram from Budd imploring me to go to Bristol, as he needed my advice. I was in Birmingham, and I set forth at once. When I reached Bristol he conducted me to a fine mansion, and there poured out his tale of woe. He had started in great style, hoping to rally the remains of his father's patients, but his money had run out, he was dunned by his tradespeople, there were no patients, and what was he to do? We had a joyous, riotous time for two days, for there was an exuberant atmosphere about the man which rose above all trouble. The only advice I could give was that he should make a composition with his creditors. I heard afterwards that he assembled them, addressed them in a long and emotional speech, reduced them almost to tears with his picture of the struggles of a deserving young man, and finally got a unanimous vote of confidence from them with full consent that he should pay at his own leisure. It was the sort of thing that he would do, and tell the story afterwards with a bull's roar of laughter which could be heard down the street.

When I had been back a couple of months from Africa I received another telegram—he always telegraphed, and never wrote—which ran in some such way as this: "Started here last June. Colossal success. Come down by next train if possible. Plenty of room for you. Splendid opening." The telegram was stamped Plymouth. A second even more explosive telegram upbraided me for delay, and guaranteed me three hundred pounds the first year. This looked like business, so off I went.

SIX AMUSING WEEKS.

The events of the next six weeks, in the late spring and early summer of 1882, were more fitted for some rollicking novel than for the sober pages of a veracious chronicle. The conditions which I found at Plymouth were incredible. In a short time this man, half genius and half quack, had founded a practice worth several thousand pounds of ready money in the year. "Free consultations, but pay for your medicine," was his slogan, and as he charged a good price for the latter, it worked out all the same in the end. The mere words, "Free Consultations," attracted crowds. He used drugs in an heroic and indiscriminate manner which produced dramatic results, but at an unjustifiable risk. I remember one instance where dropsy had disappeared before a severe dose of croton oil in a way that set all the gossips talking. People flocked into the town from twenty and thirty miles round, and not only his waiting-rooms, but his stairs and his passages, were crammed. His behaviour to them was extraordinary. He roared and shouted, scolded them, joked them, pushed them about, and pursued them sometimes into the street, or addressed them collectively from the landing. A morning with him when the practice was in full blast was as funny as any pantomime, and I was exhausted with laughter. He had a well-worn volume on Medical Jurisprudence which he pretended was the Bible, and he swore old women on it that they would drink no more tea. I have no doubt he did a great deal of good, for there was reason and knowledge behind all that he did, but his manner of doing it was unorthodox in the extreme. His wife made up the prescriptions at a pigeon-hole at the end of a passage, and received the price which was marked on the label carried down by the patient. Every evening Budd walked back to his great residential house upon the Hoe, bearing his bag of silver, his coat flying, his hat on the back of his head, and his great fangs grinning up at every doctor whose disgusted face showed at a window.

Budd had rigged me up a room, furnished with one table and two chairs, in which I could take surgical or other cases which he did not care to handle. I fear that my professional manners were very unexciting after his more flamboyant efforts, which I could not imitate even if I would. I had, however, a steady dribble of patients, and it looked as if I might build something up. I went up-country once and operated upon an old fellow's nose which had contracted cancer through his holding the bowl of a short clay pipe immediately beneath it. I left him with an aristocratic, not to say supercilious, organ, which was the wonder of the village and might have been the foundation of my fame.

Conan Doyle and friends in his Southsea days.

A DEEP PLOT.

But there were other influences at work, and the threads of fate were shooting out at strange, unexpected angles. My mother had greatly resented my association with Budd. Her family pride had been aroused, and justly as I can now see, though my wanderings had left me rather too Bohemian and careless upon points of etiquette. But I liked Budd, and even now I can't help liking him—and I admired his strong qualities and enjoyed his company and the extraordinary situations which arose from any association with him. This resistance upon my part, and my defence of my friend,

annoyed my mother the more, and she wrote me several letters of remonstrance which certainly dealt rather faithfully with his character as it appeared to her. I was careless of my papers, and these letters were read both by Budd and his wife. I do them no injustice in saying this, for they finally admitted it. Apparently he imagined—he was a man of strange suspicions and secret plottings—that I was a party to such sentiments, whereas they were actually called forth by my defence of him. His manner changed, and more than once I caught his fierce grey eyes looking furtively at me with a strange sullen expression, so much so that I asked him what was the matter. He was actually scheming my ruin, which would be nothing financially, since I had nothing to lose, but would be much both to my mother and me if it touched my honour.

One day he came to me and told me that he thought my presence complicated his practice and that we had better part. I agreed in all good humour, assuring him that I had not come to hurt him and that I was very grateful for what he had done, even if it came to nothing. He then strongly advised me to go into practice myself. I replied that I had no capital. He answered that he would see to that, that he would allow me a pound a week until I got my feet under me, and that I could repay it at leisure. I thanked him warmly, and after looking at Tavistock I finally decided that Portsmouth would be a good place, the only reason being that I knew the conditions at Plymouth, and Portsmouth seemed analogous. I boarded an Irish steamer, therefore, and about July of 1882 I started off by sea, with one small trunk containing all my earthly possessions, to start practice in a town in which I knew no single soul. My cash balance was under ten pounds, and I knew not only that I had to meet all present expenses upon this, but that I had to furnish a house upon it. On the other hand, the weekly pound should easily cover all personal needs, and I had the devil-may-care optimism of youth as to the future.

When I arrived at Portsmouth I went into lodgings for a week. On the very first night, with that curious faculty for running into dramatic situations which has always been with me, I became involved in a street fight with a rough who was beating (or rather kicking) a woman. It was a strange start, and after I began my practice one of the first people to whom I opened my door was this very rascal. I don't suppose he recognized me, but I could have sworn to him. I emerged from the fray without much damage, and was very glad to escape some serious scandal.

Conan Doyle standing at the gate of the house at Southsea in which he began his career as a doctor. This house is now called Doyle House.

MY START AT SOUTHSEA.

I spent a week in marking down the unoccupied houses, and finally settled at forty pounds a year into Bush Villa, which a kindly landlord has now called Doyle House. I was terrified lest the agent should ask for a deposit, but the name of my C.B. uncle as reference turned the scale in my favour. Having secured the empty house and its key, I went down to a sale in Portsea and for about four pounds secured quite a lot of second-hand—possibly tenth-hand—furniture. It met

my needs and enabled me to make one room possible for patients with three chairs, a table, and a central patch of carpet. I had a bed of sorts and a mattress upstairs. I fixed up the plate which I had brought from Plymouth, bought a red lamp on tick, and fairly settled down in receipt of custom. When all was done I had a couple of pounds in hand. Servants, of course, were out of the question, so I polished my own plate every morning, brushed down my front, and kept the house reasonably clean. I found that I could live quite easily and well on less than a shilling a day, so I could hold out for a long period.

"I polished my own plate every morning, brushed down my front, and kept the house reasonably clean."

I had at this time contributed several stories to *London Society*, a magazine now defunct, but then flourishing under the editorship of a Mr. Hogg. In the April, 1882, number I had a story, now happily forgotten, called "Bones," while in the preceding Christmas number I had another, "The Gully of Bluemansdyke," both of them feeble echoes of Bret Harte. These, with the stories already mentioned, made up my whole output at this time. I explained to Mr. Hogg how I was situated, and wrote for him a new tale for his Christmas number entitled "My Friend the Murderer." Hogg behaved very well and sent me ten pounds, which I laid by for my first quarter's rent. I was not so pleased with him when, years later, he claimed the full copyright of all these immature stories, and published them in a volume with my name attached. Have a care, young authors, have a care, or your worst enemy will be your early self.

THE PLOT EXPLODES.

It was as well that I had that ten pounds, for Budd, having learned that I was fairly committed, with my lease signed, now hurled his thunderbolt, which he thought would crush me. It was a curt letter — not a telegram, for a wonder — in which he admitted that my letters had been read, expressed surprise that such a correspondence should have gone on while I was under his roof, and declared that he could have nothing more to do with me. He had, of course, no real grievance, but I am quite willing to admit that he honestly thought he had. But his method of revenge was a strange example of the schemings of a morbid mind.

For a moment I was staggered. But my boats were burned and I must go forward. I sent back a derisive reply to Budd, and put him out of my head for ever—indeed, I heard of him no more until some five years later I read the news of his premature death. He was a remarkable man and narrowly escaped being a great one. I fear that he lived up to his great income and left his wife but poorly off.

*(**Several phases of Conan Doyle's** life, such as his adventures in the Arctic Seas and with the **Army in South Africa, have been** treated in past numbers of "The Strand Magazine" and **have therefore been omitted.** **There** are also phases of his life, such as his religious development, **which will be found in the** completed book but are hardly suited for magazine use.)*

THE GENTLEMAN WHO PAYS THE RENT

by

PERCEVAL GIBBON

ILLUSTRATED BY A. C. MICHAEL

THE door of the little studio stood ajar; he knocked once with his knuckles to announce himself and pushed it wide. Alys, her paint-smeared smock covering her from neck to ankles, palette on thumb, looked up at him from her easel.

"Hullo, Hartley!" she greeted him.

"Hullo!" said Hartley Craven. He thrust the door to, crossed the room swiftly, and kissed her with the practised expertness of the betrothed.

"Heaps to tell you," he said, briskly. "Come and sit down; it's too late to paint now, anyway."

"He's arrived, then?" asked Alys.

"I met him at the station, went with him to the Ritz, and lunched with him. And, my dear, he's nothing like as awful as we feared. Really——"

"As *you* feared," interrupted Alys. She was putting her brushes into the tall turpentine jar. "I always said you'd be pleasantly disappointed. But what is he like?"

"Well, at the station I was rather afraid of missing him, but I certainly needn't have been. He showed up in the crowd like a flaming cock in a chicken-run. I was standing at the barrier, looking at those who passed, when I saw him bearing down on me. A tall old man in black clothes, with a huge-brimmed black hat, and under the brim of that hat a dull, yellow face, with a great beak curving over a cascade of pure silver moustache and reaching down from under a thicket of white eyebrows. And behind him, one a little to the left and the other to the right, came his retinue. There was a big young negro carrying hand-baggage, all a-grin as he walked; and on the other side an old stoop-shouldered nigger, in the longest frock-coat I ever saw, carrying nothing, but just glaring ahead past his master—glaring, I tell you. I can't describe it. It was as if that foolish negro face of his were a wall to dam up and keep in some strange and strong fires that glowed through his eyes.

"I stepped up to the old man. 'Monsieur Phillidor Carcasse?' I inquired.

"He stopped and beamed on me. 'It is Mr. Hartley Craven?' he said, in English. 'But I am sure it is! Ah, my dear young man, so now at last I see you, the son of my one great friend. What a joy!'

"You know, I was startled. All his letters to me from Haiti have been in French, with little scraps of funny English stuck in here and there. The English he speaks is ready and good enough.

"'I didn't know you spoke English,' I said, stupidly.

"He just beamed on me again, patting me on the shoulders with his great hands.

"'I speak, but I don't write very nice,' he said.

"Well, I got him down to the Ritz. He insisted on having the old nigger inside the limousine with us.

"'Esteban!' he presented him. 'Esteban comes with me always. Without Esteban I cannot travel at all.'

"He smiled at the old creature, rather foolishly, I thought, and the negro's thick lips curled for the first time in what looked to me like a sneer."

Alys had come to sit beside him on the edge of the model-throne. He swung sideways to face her as he talked.

"But, my dear," he went on, "you ought to see his quarters at the Ritz! He's got about half a whole floor. Gorgeous—

the kind of thing they keep for royalties on a state visit. But you'll see it all to-night."

"Me?" queried Alys.

He nodded. "He's my guardian, you know, and we'd better get it over. So we're dining with him to-night. You might like him, even; there's something fairly soft and domesticated about him, for all his look of a monstrous old eagle. I'll bet that when my dad was alive there was only one boss in the firm of Craven and Carcasse."

"Your father, you mean?"

"Yes," said Hartley. "He died when I was a kid and I never saw much of him. But if he'd got a soft spot for anyone but me, I didn't see it."

Alys leaned against his shoulder. "Perhaps M. Phillidor Carcasse is like that too," she suggested. "I'm afraid I am. And now, if I've to dress up to the royal suite at the Ritz, you must go."

Hartley Craven's recollection of his father was like the blurred but ineffaceable memory one retains of some breathless and swiftly-ended scene of action, an impression in which neither figures nor gestures are clear, but only the savour of one's own emotions. He had not even any very clear vision of his father's face. His business, that of the firm of Craven and Carcasse, was domiciled in the tropic squalor of the negro "republics" of Haiti and San Domingo and upon the seas thereabouts. Save that it prospered and paid him an agreeable income under his father's will, Hartley knew nothing of it. It gave him a pleasant life in Paris; his guardian, under the will, had been always liberal and complaisant; and it was only now, when he was come to Paris to exercise his right of consent or refusal to Hartley's choice of a wife, that he appeared as anything other than a money-remitting abstraction.

MONSIEUR PHILLIDOR CARCASSE met them that evening in the anteroom of the great palace-suite of rooms. He bowed to Alys over a shirt-front that seemed as vast as a carpet; he was almost intolerable in evening-dress. From his neck, by a blue-and-crimson silk ribbon, there depended the jewel of some Order, a thing bizarre with gems. The great mass of his white hair and the flare of his moustache gave him, however, something of reverend splendour.

"It is I that shall now have the honour!" he announced, and offered his arm to lead her forward to the *salon* next in order in that stately procession of great rooms.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, when he had seated her. He had one great elbow upon a corner of a mantel, and looked down upon her with what struck the girl as a conscious effort of geniality. She saw forthwith what Hartley had meant; this showy old giant was nothing to be afraid of. There was that in his mild and magnificent eye that strove to placate her. He was attitudinizing for her approval.

"Ah!" he breathed again, loudly. "But here is a thing that shall not keep us waiting. Why, now, have I come this long way? To ask you questions? But no; those I have asked by the cable, by the mail, before I come. I know the answer to all questions. You are Miss Herrick; your father is Mr. Aylmer Herrick, in Baltimore; I know all. Why, then——"

His voice was rolling oratorically, when Hartley, standing at the other end of the mantel, leaned across to him.

"Pardon, M. Carcasse," he said, "I'm sure you haven't noticed that we are not alone."

"Eh?" Phillidor Carcasse stared a moment, and then his eyes and those of the girl followed the motion of Hartley's head. In the half-open door that led to the anteroom by which they had entered Alys saw the figure of an old negro, with forward bent head, only too patently staring and listening. The skirts of a long coat dangled at his bent-over knees; one gnarled black hand held the door ajar. He did not move when they looked towards him.

There was a moment of silence. Then Phillidor Carcasse let go a great puff of breath.

"That!" he cried. "But that is Esteban! Esteban—he comes and he goes. When you know him you will understand. And, there—see now! Already he is gone."

The old negro had backed clear of the doorway and disappeared. Alys and Hartley exchanged glances. Phillidor Carcasse intercepted them and beat them down with a new spate of eloquence.

"Why, then, have I come this long way? But it is plain, is it not, that I have come for this great pleasure—to see my dear young man and with my own mouth to make him happy. Such another gift never can I give. And shall I then deny it? Ah, never, never!"

He stepped forward, bent to Alys's hand, kissed, and rose beaming to shake hands with Hartley. He effervesced with compliments and congratulations. And yet all the time there was something perfunctory in his heartiness; it was like a thing that had got to be done, a task to be accomplished and finished with.

The dreadfully splendid dinner wore to its end at last; and finally they were alone in their cab.

"Well?" said Hartley.

"I don't know," said Alys. "There aren't such people really, you know! They don't exist because they can't; that's logic!"

Hartley laughed. "Maybe it's a product peculiar to Haiti," he suggested. "A tropic flower, you know. Well, anyhow, the tropic flower has given his consent, and that's what we wanted. But I wish the tropic flower wouldn't let that old nigger come eavesdropping when he does it."

"'That is Esteban—he comes and he goes,'" quoted Alys. "I think it's rather picturesque. He's evidently the body-guard and private assassin; I should like to see more of Esteban."

SHE saw him again no later than the following afternoon. He arrived at the studio while she and Hartley were sitting at tea, carrying a flat parcel, and announced his errand forthwith.

"From M. Phillidor to M'amselle 'Errick," he said.

His French had the West Indian blur upon the vowels, but was quite fluent and patently his native tongue.

Alys smiled at him. His old grey-black face was almost comic in its profound seriousness; it recalled a child deeply impressed by the importance of some small errand. For a second the glare of which Hartley had spoken peeped from the eyes below the great bony ridges of his brows. Alys, marking it, was touched; it was as if a mild dumb animal gazed at them both in yearning and hopelessness.

"Oh, wait, please," she said. "I must see what's in it."

"Wait, Esteban!" confirmed Hartley.

The white paper contained a large oval case of russia leather. The lid fastened with a spring and rose upon its hinges to the touch of a button.

Alys uttered a little scream. "By Jove!" exclaimed Hartley.

Upon its bed of cream-coloured satin, the necklace flashed and flittered like a firework. There was not one of its many diamonds that was not worth the value of the studio, its contents and the land it stood upon. Queens wore such things and are thereby queenly.

The girl gazed at it in awe. "But—but how would I ever wear it?" she cried. "I simply shouldn't dare! It's one of the wonders of the world! And here's a card: 'For an auspice of bright and shining years, from Phillidor Carcasse.' Oh, Hartley, what shall I do?"

"Write and thank him, I should think," answered Hartley. "Or we can go and see him, if you prefer."

From behind them, where he stood waiting, the old negro spoke suddenly.

"Better you write," he said, in English. "M. Carcasse go-way again t'morrow. To-night he want talk to young gemmun, Mister Craven. I tell him you come. That a'right?"

"To-morrow!" exclaimed Hartley. "Are you sure?"

"Sure," replied the negro. "Go 'way to Spain. Find ship. Go 'ome. You come?"

"Yes," said Hartley, doubtfully. "I'll come, of course. But it's strange that——"

He broke off in surprise, for upon the word that he would come the old black man turned abruptly to the door and departed.

"Hartley!" Alys spoke as the door closed behind him. "Isn't it all queer? People simply don't behave like this. Comes all the way from Haiti to say 'yes'; gives a present that is worth as much as the National Debt; sends it by the hands of an old darky; and then slips off. Don't *you* feel there's something queer about it all?"

"Don't know," said Hartley. "Perhaps it would all seem quite natural over there. I'm to have a talk with him to-night. I may get to understand something."

But when an hotel flunkey opened the door of the suite to him that evening and ushered him into the great *salon*, his host was not present. Instead, the negro Esteban stood in the middle of the room. He did not bow or smile as Hartley Craven entered, nor did he speak till the footman had withdrawn.

"Be seated," he said then in French, and walked away towards the fireplace.

The young man found himself a chair and sat with dignity.

"M. Carcasse is in?" he inquired.

"He is in," answered the negro. "But of him—presently!"

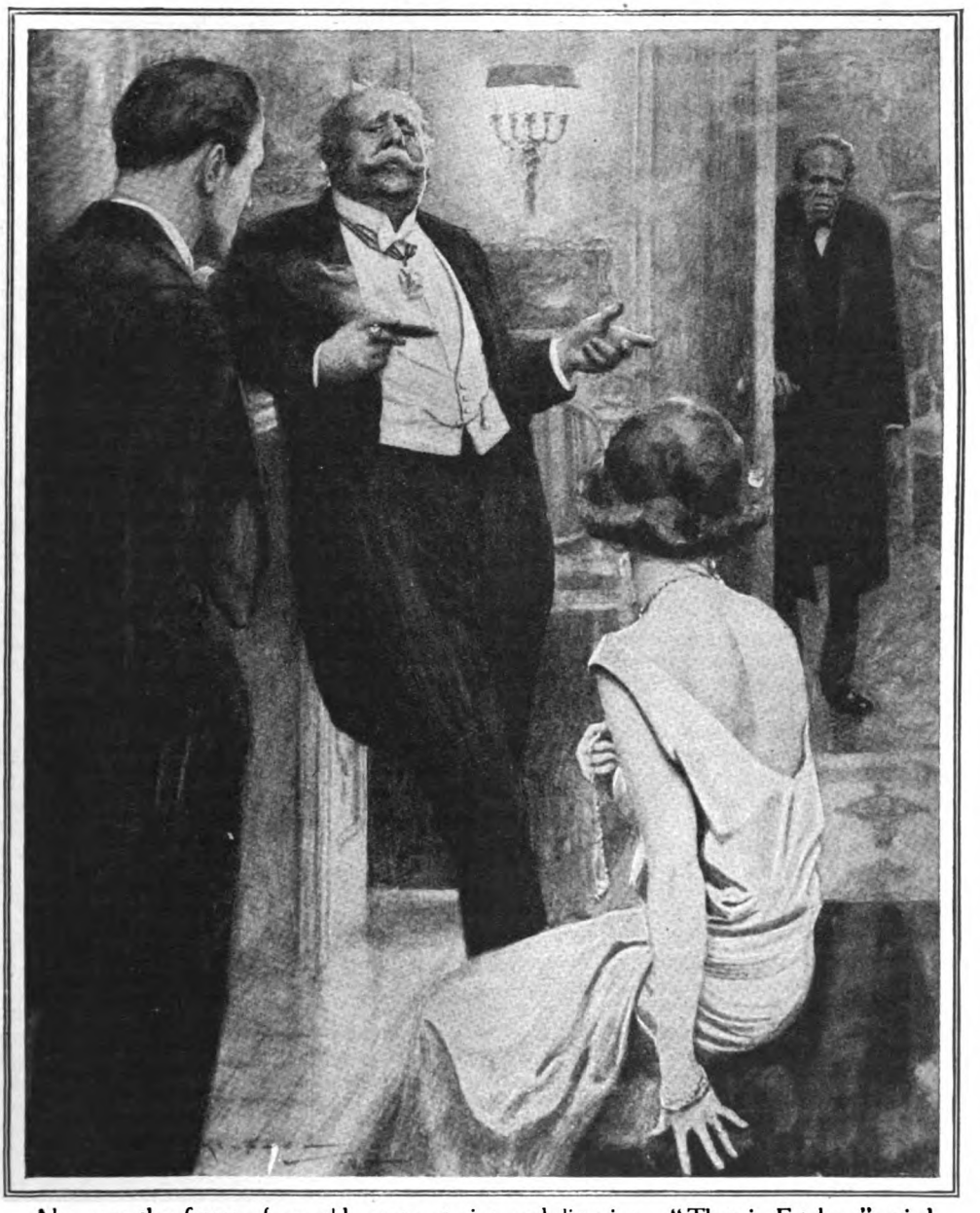
He had turned with his back to the empty grate and now clasped his hands behind him under the tails of the long coat. In that posture he looked down at Hartley with a manner that was touched with authority.

"Monsieur Hartley Craven," he said, "I knew your father. I worked under him when first he came to Haiti, a poor man. Do you remember him well?"

Hartley hesitated upon the brink of a snub; the prospect of a conversation did not please him. But he decided to reply.

"I never saw much of my father," he answered. "I was a child in New York when he died in Haiti."

The gaunt negro nodded. "He used to talk of you," he said. "His grave is keep green and trim in your name. I do it myself; it would please him. You see, there was none who knew him as I did."



Alys saw the figure of an old negro, staring and listening. "That is Esteban," cried Phillidor. "Esteban—he comes and he goes. When you know him you will understand."

Hartley felt there was a claim being made upon him. He kept silence.

The other's old eyes gleamed.

"Ah!" he said. "You are thinking of Phillidor, his partner! It is true Phillidor loved him. I was present when your father first saw Phillidor and saved his life. There was a new President in power, and a party of his soldiers and officers were taking Phillidor and some others through the streets to shoot them on the beach. Their hands were tied together and the bamboo sticks were driving them along. And your father saw Phillidor and Phillidor saw your father. He, John Craven, said afterwards that it was because he saw in Phillidor the man he wanted.

"He stepped forward to the big black

officer in charge and spoke. Phillidor saw a white hand go forward and a black one come out to meet it, and the roll of green American money pass from the one to the other. Then the officer went forward and kicked Phillidor so that he fell on his face in the dust at John Craven's feet, and passed on with his party, leaving him there."

"Ah," said Hartley. "So that's how they met, is it?"

The negro nodded slowly. "And now, you would hear—yes?—how that partnership grew to a great business, a business in which you, monsieur, could never have a part?"

"Well, I'd like to hear, certainly," said Hartley. "But since M. Carcasse is waiting for me——"

"He is not waiting," interrupted the other, with a spark of impatience. "And if he were, he is used to it. And this is your father we are talking of!"

"All right!" said Hartley. It had occurred to him that he might gain here a clue to the general "queerness" of things of which Alys had spoken. "My father, certainly. I am listening."

"Now," resumed the negro, "you do not know the island. There are minerals to be mined, but the people will not labour. There is sugar, and fruit and spice; but none to care for them. There are taxes, grinding taxes, and no honest men to collect them. There is graft and apathy everywhere. But *our* mines are worked, our plantations are flourishing, and no one steals from *us*. Why is this, eh?"

He shook at Hartley a great forefinger gnarled like a dead twig.

"I tell you there is in that country a power greater than armies and warships, greater than love or religion. The forests, the jungles, the mountains, and the valleys—they all reek with it; men go from cradle to the grave under the dominion of it. It is fear!

"Fear by day and fear by night! Not of death or pain, but of something unknown, scarcely guessed at. A fear that can destroy the brain and kill!"

Hartley nodded. "Voodoo," he murmured. "I've read of it. All nonsense, of course!"

The old negro stared at him fixedly. "Of course!" he assented. "But your father didn't think so—and Phillidor does not think so!"

Hartley sat up. A wave of what he took to be enlightenment flooded his mind. Carcasse believed in this horrible voodoo business, and the old negro before him was Carcasse's private priest—his domestic chaplain, so to speak. He listened with lively attention.

"Phillidor knew, and already he had used the power. But now he began to employ it for your father, and soon John Craven was walking all unknowing among men who dreaded his very shadow on the ground. Labourers were wanted; and the sign would go out, to be found in the morning upon the thresholds of huts; and the labourer would come forthwith. Lawsuits were started against them; and the judges would come creeping by night to Phillidor to take their orders. No titles to their lands, no laws, no justice—only the power. But you say it is nonsense, of course!"

HE smiled slowly.

"Oh, I know the people out there believe in it," said Hartley.

"Yes," said the other. "They have cause, as John Craven had. There was a woman, nearly white, in Port-au-Prince. She sent your father the usual gifts with the usual meaning; she put herself in his way; but it was useless. John Craven was very staunchly a white man. So, one night she put the 'Satan' sign on his doorstep. He stepped over it in the morning, bent to look at it—a certain arrangement of bones and cock's feathers—laughed, and kicked it away."

"Laughed, though," put in Hartley.

"Laughed," agreed the negro. "And then went down town and mailed his will to New York to his lawyer. And before noon, sitting on his cot alone in his rooms, he died. That night the woman disappeared; none dared even wonder how. But I knew! I knew *what* called her away—and whither!"

"H'm!" said Hartley. "You, I suppose, were M. Carcasse's servant or something."

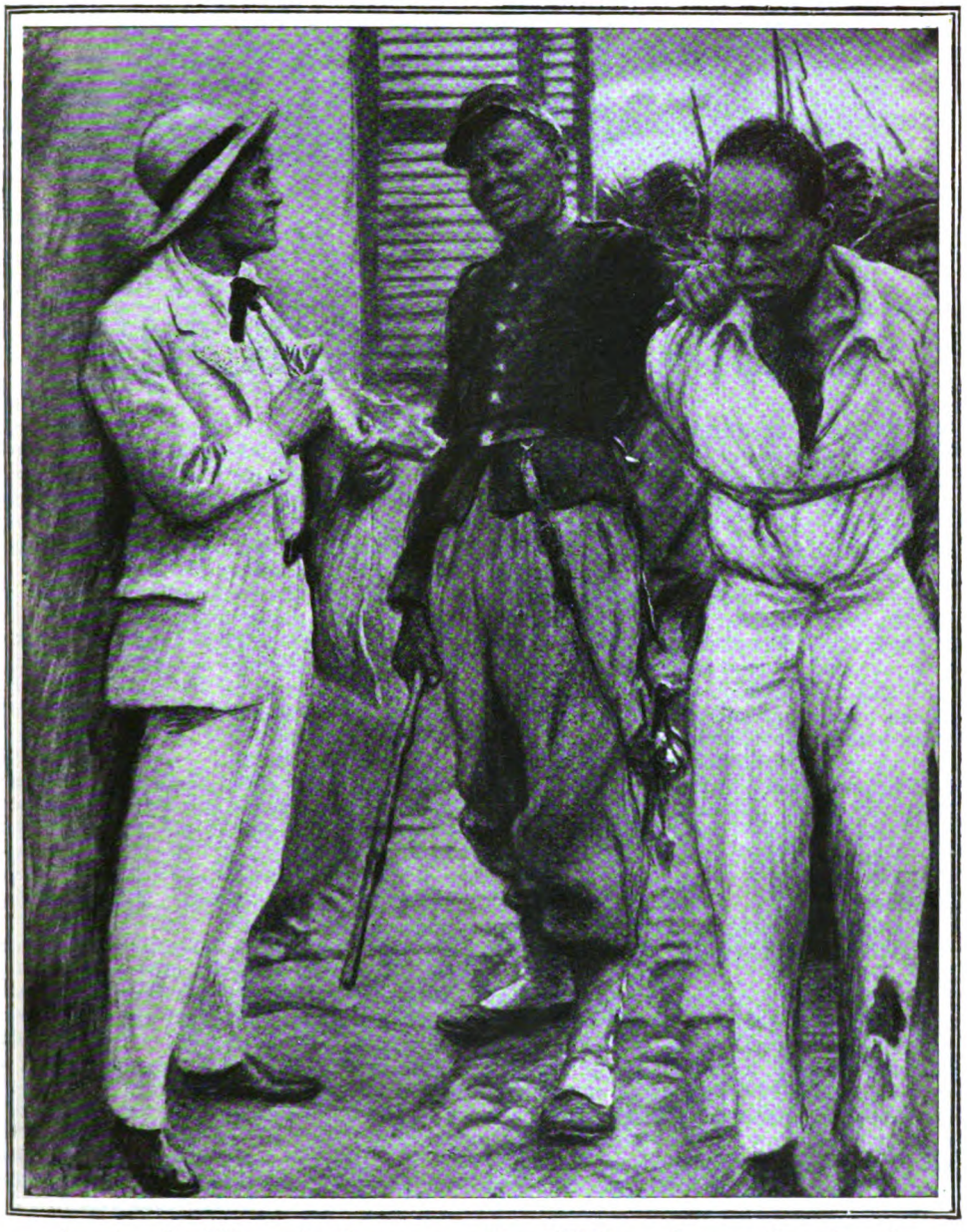
"Servant—I!" The other showed frank surprise for an instant. "I have told you all this that you may see how the business stands—no titles, no leases, no contracts, only fear! And upon my death it vanishes. For you there will be a fortune in American investments; but in Haiti, nothing. You see?"

"But why upon *your* death?" demurred Hartley.

"Eh? You haven't guessed? Then, monsieur, permit me to introduce myself." He bowed. "Phillidor Carcasse!" he pronounced.

Hartley goggled at him speechlessly.

"Ah, monsieur," went on the other, "John Craven was my friend. Shall I bring to his son in Paris for a guardian and a trustee, to give consent to his marriage"—he switched to his distorted English—"shall I bring ole nigger, old voodoo man, for de



A party of soldiers and officers were taking Phillidor and some others through the streets to shoot them on the beach. John Craven stepped forward to the big black officer in charge.

folks to laugh at you ? " Then in French again: " Esteban is a fool, but he is big and fine to look at with his white hair. He is my agent in San Domingo. So I bring him and there is nothing to laugh at. You see now ? "

Hartley nodded. The old man withdrew his hands from behind his back and moved slowly to the door.

" I will send Esteban," he said. " He will drink champagne with you. And me ——" he paused and smiled faintly. " I promise I will keep the grave trim and fresh ! "

AT MR. BESLEY'S

by

DENIS MACKAIL

ILLUSTRATED BY NORAH SCHLEGEL

HEAVY lace curtains and heavy plush curtains and yellowish lace-edged blinds decorated the windows of Mr. Besley's waiting-room, and, in an additional effort to exclude the light of Heaven, wooden frames containing a chequer-board of tinted glass squares had been fixed in the lower portion of each sash. A large table occupied the middle of the room, a table covered with a dark tapestry cloth and a number of well-worn illustrated papers. In its geometrical centre a fluted china vessel held a flower-pot, in which in turn there struggled for existence a dirty-looking and cataleptic plant. An odd kind of stove, which provided a faint glow of light and no appreciable heat, stood under the elaborate overmantel. The walls were a deep and dingy red, and were hung with engravings of such incomparable dullness that the human eye involuntarily slid away from them whenever it roved in their direction.

The door opened, actuated by an attendant whose attire bore some fanciful resemblance to that of a hospital nurse, and admitted a tall young man of a pronounced pallor. As it closed behind him he glanced round with the look of an animal caught in a trap, made a hasty movement as if he would retreat, and then with a second gesture, indicating that he felt himself to be in the hands of Fate, he lowered himself on to one of the uncomfortable fumed-oak chairs. As he did so, the marble clock in the overmantel gurgled, choked, caught its breath, and struck three. Its hands, with a more accurate notion of their duty, pointed to half-past twelve o'clock.

"It's a most curious thing," muttered the pale young man, as he gazed at the dirty-looking plant, "but the pain's absolutely gone. I wish I'd never rung old Besley up. He's bound to start it off again when he goes poking about with his beastly tools. I was a fool to come here. I could easily have put him off. I——"

He turned his head as the door opened again.

"Thank you," said a voice which he had once known as well as his own.

He started from his chair, all trace of that nervous pallor completely gone.

"Barbara!" he gasped, as the door shut again behind the new arrival.

"Dick!" answered his wife. And then, recovering herself: "What on earth are you doing here?"

"I——" he began.

"You must leave at once. Don't you know that if anyone saw us here, Bridgers' would throw up the case? How could you be so thoughtless?"

"But, Barbara, I——"

"Go, quickly—please. Before anyone finds us here."

"But dash it all, Barbara, surely a man can visit his own dentist without—— Besides," he substituted, throwing himself on her mercy, "I've had the most awful toothache. I never slept all night. It's been agony. You don't know what I've been through."

"There are lots of other dentists in this street," answered Lady Sparrow, coldly. "Of course I'm sorry if you're in pain, but really——" She broke off impatiently. "Didn't it occur to you," she asked, "that Besley was my dentist as well as yours?"

"He was my dentist first," said her husband, sulkily. "If anyone's to go somewhere else, then I think it ought to be you. Heaven knows I've had enough trouble over this rotten business, but I did at least think you'd let me have my own teeth out where I chose."

"You haven't changed, I see," answered Lady Sparrow.

"Of course I haven't," said Sir Richard. And then, eagerly: "That's just my point,

Barbara. If only you and Bridger would give me a chance to explain, I——"

His wife checked his outburst by the simple yet effective means of shuddering.

"I don't doubt that you've invented some explanation by now," she said. "You seem to forget, though, that I saw you and your Mrs. Arden with my own eyes."

"She's not my Mrs. Arden," the man protested. "If only you and Bridger——"

"Oh, it's not only me and Mr. Bridger, Dick. You know perfectly well that people had been talking about you for weeks and months."

"Talk!" snorted Sir Richard.

"Well? They wouldn't have talked if you hadn't given them something to talk about."

"Bah!"

"I suppose you'll marry her?" asked Lady Sparrow, sweetly.

Sir Richard seemed to choke.

"Or is that only 'talk,' too?"

Sir Richard made a great effort.

"If it comes to that," he said, thickly, "I suppose you know what they're all saying about you?"

"Something very charming, I gather," said his wife. "What is it? Drink? Or drugs?"

"They say that you're only waiting for the case to be over to marry Johnnie Panton."

Lady Sparrow's manner underwent a startling change.

"What?" she cried. "Me marry that red-headed little ape! You mean to tell me, Dick, that you've been standing by and letting people say that about your own—I mean, about me! *Oh!*"

"Well, how was I to know it wasn't true?" asked Sir Richard.

"You believed it, then?"

"Well, dash it, Barbara, it's nothing to what you believed about me."

She darted an angry look at him.

"Then Johnnie's out of it, is he?" asked Sir Richard.

"Of course he's out of it. What brutes, what devils people are! To say that just because I let him drive me back from Gatwick when the car broke down. Not that you would care, though. You can go off and leave your wife alone for any carroty little beast to insult, and——"

"But, Barbara, I only went because you told me to go."

"You're impossible!" she exclaimed.

Sir Richard stroked his jaw nervously.

"Is—excuse my asking," he said, after a moment, "but is the car all right again? I mean, of course, Rabbitt was jolly useful for looking after my clothes when we were down at the cottage, but he never did understand machinery. You really ought to let me take him over from you, and get a decent chauffeur who can do running repairs. Just say the word, and I'd pick you out a really first-class fellow."

Lady Sparrow, who had been trying to look out of the window, turned back again in a sudden fury.

"Once and for all," she said, "will you kindly leave the house and allow me to see my own dentist without inflicting yourself on me in this—in this insufferable way?"

Sir Richard recoiled.

"Steady on, Barbara," he protested. "I got here first."

"Are you going?"

"No, I'm hanged if I'm going. You've turned me out of my own house, you've made me write the most ridiculous letter to old Bridger, which is going to make me the laughing-stock of the whole club, you've kept my gramophone and all the new records, and now you expect me to change my dentist as well. It's too much, Barbara. I'm blowed if I'm going."

"I knew you'd stopped caring for me," said Lady Sparrow, with great emotion, "but I didn't think—I never thought that you were a cad."

"Well, you're wrong both times, old girl."

His wife glared at him.

"Coward!" she said, slowly.

"No," said Sir Richard. "That's the one thing that I'm not. I may have been a bit of a fool over Mrs. Arden—though Heaven knows I'm having to pay for it now—but nobody can call me a coward when they find me in Besley's waiting-room. If I were a coward, I'd take any excuse to cut the appointment and come back later on—especially when I tell you that I haven't had so much as a trace of toothache ever since breakfast this morning. But——"

"It doesn't occur to you to ask whether *I* have been having toothache or not, I notice," Lady Sparrow interrupted.

Sir Richard's self-confident manner suddenly left him.

"I say," he apologized, "what a brute I am, B.! Quarrelling with you here like this when all the time I expect you're feeling like nothing on earth." His face became positively contorted with sympathy. "Is it very bad, old thing?" he asked. "Is it the stabbing kind?"

"I——"

"Or the steady, growling sort?"

One doesn't know what answer Lady Sparrow had originally prepared to these questions, but in the end truth and honesty won the day.

"As a matter of fact," she said, and for the first time she spoke without an under-

tone of anger—"as a matter of fact, the pain seemed to go away altogether while I was driving here just now. I think it must have been neuralgia really."

"Poor dear," said her husband, more sympathetically than ever. "Didn't you try taking aspirin?"

"Yes, but—— Oh, Dickie, why can't——"

She stopped.

"Why can't what?" asked her husband.

Lady Sparrow shook her head.

"Once and for all," she said, "will you kindly leave the house and allow me to see my own dentist without inflicting yourself on me in this—in this insufferable way?"

"Nothing," she said. And then: "I wish you'd go, Dick. It's all very—very upsetting for me meeting you here like this. It was quite bad enough coming to see Mr. Besley at all, without—— But you wouldn't understand."

"It's been very upsetting for me, too," said Sir Richard. "I won't say I was getting used to doing without you, but I was just beginning to sort of struggle along again, and now——"

"Oh, it's easy for a man. You've got all your friends; you've got your clubs;

if it comes to that, you've got Mrs. Arden, while——"

"Listen to me, B.," Sir Richard broke in forcibly. "I don't care what you and Bridger decide to tell the judge. I've made up my mind to face all that, if it's got to be faced. But hang it all, when we're alone together like this, do at least let's be honest. You know perfectly well that I haven't set eyes on Mrs. Arden ever since I left Charles Street. If it comes to that, I don't even know where she is."

"You don't know where she is?" repeated Lady Sparrow, in apparent astonishment.

"No. And what's more, I don't care."

"BUT—but why did you write and tell me that your heart was given to another, and that—that it was your inflexible determination never to return to me again?"

"Oh, well," Sir Richard laughed uncomfortably, "I had to say something, didn't I?"

"I don't understand."

"Well, I'm not sure that I do either. But my lawyer fellow went and had a talk with Bridger, and he came back and told me that I'd got to write a letter like that. I should have thought you'd have guessed that I was only doing it to please you."

"To please me? You're mad."

"Well, dash it, Barbara, you'd just written and said that you were always ready to make a home for me, and considering that you'd had all my pyjamas sent round to the club——"

"But Mr. Bridger told me to do that."

"Well, I don't see why you wanted to go to old Bridger about it at all. There's been too much Bridger about this altogether, if you ask me."

"But mother said——"

"There you are. I knew she was at the bottom of it."

"She's not at the bottom of it at all. You'd insulted me in every possible kind of way, and if a woman isn't to take advice from her mother and her solicitor, who *is* she to go to?"

"Well, I should have thought she might have gone to her husband."

"Oh, you would, would you?" said Lady Sparrow. "You seem to forget that in this case the husband had said he was going to the country to look at a horse and that his wife saw him the same evening at the Suppertime Frolics—with Mrs. Arden."

"And *you* seem to forget," retorted Sir Richard, "that the husband saw the wife at the Suppertime Frolics with Johnnie Panton."

"And with her mother," added Lady Sparrow.

"Exactly. And what possible harm could anyone do if your mother was there? There we all were, perfectly respectable and watching the dullest cabaret in London, and yet you must go home in the middle and put the chain on the front door. I tell you I looked an awful ass when I turned my latch-key and found I couldn't get into my own house."

"I expect you did," said Lady Sparrow.

"Well, if it's any satisfaction to you, I *felt* an awful ass as well."

"However, I've no doubt that Mrs. Arden soon put that right."

"Good Lord, Barbara, you don't imagine I went back to Mrs. Arden at that time of night! Why, she'd have had a fit."

Lady Sparrow shrugged her beautiful shoulders.

"The fact remains," she said, icily, "that you had told me a deliberate lie, that you were found out, and that you've had to take the consequences."

"Oh, I've taken the consequences all right. And I dare say I did tell a lie. But it wasn't deliberate."

"Oh?"

"No, my dear B. I've put myself out in every possible way to oblige you ever since this regrettable incident. But since we do happen to have run across each other like this, we may as well get the thing cleared up once and for all. I had every intention of going down to the cottage that night. I'd packed my bag, I'd telegraphed to say I was coming, I'd even taken my ticket. But I missed the train."

"Bad luck!" said Lady Sparrow, contemptuously.

"Well, other people have missed trains without having to go into court about it."

"Other people," replied Lady Sparrow, "have missed trains without going off to the Suppertime Frolics with Mrs. Arden. But perhaps you have some equally convincing explanation for that?"

"I don't know about its being convincing," Sir Richard answered, a little uneasily; "but this is what happened. I didn't go home because I knew you were dining at your mother's. I went to the club instead, and it was while I was there that Mrs. Arden rang me up."

"Not for the first time, I imagine?"

"And she said," Sir Richard continued smoothly, "that she was a man short for a little party at the Serene Hotel, and she wanted to know if I would come. I suppose you'll say I ought to have refused. I wish to goodness, now, that I *had* refused. But in any case I didn't. I had my evening things with me in my bag, I changed at the club, and I took a taxi on to the Serene."

"Go on," said his wife, though there was little real encouragement in her voice.

"Well," proceeded Sir Richard, with still greater uneasiness, "when I got there, she said the others had telephoned to say they weren't coming. Do you know," he added, thoughtfully, "I've sometimes wondered whether she wasn't pulling my leg. But anyhow she insisted on my staying. Absolutely insisted. She asked me if I liked champagne, and naturally I said yes. Then she ordered the dickens of a supper. I was rather surprised in a way, because she'd often told me how hard up she was. However, of course, I didn't say anything at the time. And then, if you'll believe me, B., just when we'd both eaten about as much as we could hold, she suddenly began to cry. It was most infernally awkward, and I wished to goodness I hadn't come. However, I couldn't very well pay no attention when she was going on like this, so I asked her what the matter was. If you'll believe me——"

"Never mind about that," Lady Sparrow interrupted. "I'll tell you afterwards whether I believe you or not."

"Thank you," said Sir Richard, gratefully. "Well, as I was saying, I asked the old girl what the fuss was about, and she said that if she couldn't have five hundred pounds that very night she'd have to leave the country. 'Oh, rot!' I said. 'But it's true,' she said. 'I've lost everything I've got at bridge.' 'Hard luck,' I said. 'But you oughtn't to have given me such a good supper.' She looked at me in a very curious way, I thought, when I said this; so—just to show I really did think it hard luck—I said, 'Well, look here, Mrs. Arden. Let me know what train you're going by, and I'll come and see you off.' And then—I'm sorry to have to say it, B.—but at this point she suddenly became most extraordinarily rude. It was quite a shock to me that anyone as pleasant as Mrs. Arden had always been could make herself so very offensive. In fact, when I looked up and saw you and Johnnie coming across the room, it was really the most awful relief. 'Hullo!' I sang out. 'Come and sit at our table.' You remember my saying that, don't you?"

Lady Sparrow nodded.

"Well, after that, everything seemed to go wrong. First of all I suddenly saw your mother, and I realized at once that she'd try and make difficulties about it all. Then you and she and Johnnie all turned round and went out again. Then Mrs. Arden said she was feeling faint, and, though she told me to wait, she never came back, and I found I had to pay for the supper. And then, as if that wasn't bad enough, when I got home well after midnight I discovered that someone had been and put the chain on the door. Of course, I never dreamt that you could do such a silly thing as that, but I couldn't go on ringing the bell all night, so I went back to the club. I tell you, B., when I got your note in the morning, you could have knocked me down with a feather. I thought it was some kind of joke at first. It was only when the porter told me that you'd had all my things sent round that I began to wonder if you weren't serious about it. I say, darling," he concluded, plaintively, "don't you think we've had enough of all this unpleasantness? It simply worries me to death to hear of the car going wrong, and you having toothache, and now to know that you won't even have Johnnie to look after you."

AT these last and admittedly tactless words the look of interest which had been creeping into Lady Sparrow's face suddenly disappeared.

"I see," she said, frigidly. "As long as you thought there was someone to take me off your hands, you were perfectly happy about it all. Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, Dick, but, as I said before, I have no intention of marrying Mr. Panton or anyone else."

"But why do you think that will disappoint me?" asked Sir Richard, irrepressibly. "My dear B., it's the best news I've had for weeks. I only meant—well, never mind what I meant now. But you see I've had a sort of idea that if you weren't fixed up with some other fellow, then, after this case was all over, perhaps if I waited a few months—or years, if necessary—then I could propose to you again, and——"

He stopped suddenly.

"But perhaps I oughtn't to have told you that," he added, doubtfully. "Perhaps it would have been better to work up to it gradually. Eh?"

Lady Sparrow stared at him without answering.

"I say, B.," he began again, "don't take it like that. Hang it all, you know we don't go in for sentiment or slush or anything of that sort, but barring this Mrs. Arden business—which is all over in any case—nobody could say we didn't suit each other pretty well. As for your mother, of course, that's another affair altogether; and——"

"Will you kindly leave my mother alone?" interrupted Lady Sparrow.

"Dash it, B., that's been my one idea ever since we got married. But I'm like the lobster—I mean the dog—I mean, you know that old chestnut about the fellow in

the fishmonger's shop, don't you? Well, I've rather forgotten how it goes now, but what I mean is that it's hardly fair to tell me to leave your mother alone when she's got her claws into me and won't leave *me* alone. Of course, if you'll look me in the face and say that it was your own idea to put the chain on the door that night, then that finishes it. In that case I dry up at once. I retire altogether. I've nothing more to say. But *was* it your own idea? *Was* it, B.?"

"No one would ever have suggested putting the chain on the door if you hadn't insulted me in public," said Lady Sparrow.

"But you never let me explain," Sir Richard protested. "And besides, what could be more insulting than being locked out of one's own house, and having one's pyjamas returned to one like a lot of old love-letters? After all, B., what I did was an absolute accident, but no one could say that about you. I tell you I've had a perfectly rotten time, and the more I've tried to do what you wanted, the worse it's been."

"AS you're so full of explanations," said Lady Sparrow, "perhaps you'll tell me what it is that you think you've done for me—except break up our home."

"What haven't I done? Gone slinking about by myself, given up the car, given up the cottage, written that dashed silly letter for old Bridger——"

"But are you trying to tell me that you only wrote that letter because Mr. Bridger wanted you to?"

"Haven't I said so fifteen times already? Good Lord, B., did you really think I'd given my heart to another? Did you really imagine that any fellow in his senses would talk about his 'inflexible determination' or say that he 'appreciated that you had done everything in your power to please him,' unless some silly blighter of a lawyer had put him up to it? Why, my dear old thing, I've only got one heart to give away, and it's been yours ever since that evening that your hair came down at the Ffoulkeses' dance. I say, by George, you did look stunning then! And you're just as stunning to-day. There's not a woman in the whole world can hold a candle to you. Where you get it all from, goodness knows, but I tell you that when I walk about the streets and see all these other women staring at themselves in the shop windows, it simply makes me sick to think how they're wasting their time. Do you know, when you came into this filthy room just now, it was like the sun coming out after a fog or something. There had I been living for weeks and weeks with nothing but a photograph to remind me of you, and if we'd waited much longer I might have thought it was telling the truth. But was it? Of course it wasn't, even if it did say 'With all my love' across the bottom. I say, B., do you ever think of that dance at the Ffoulkeses'—or have you forgotten it?"

"I——" stammered Lady Sparrow, weakly.

"By Jove, what a night that was!" her husband rushed on. "I'd always hated conservatories up till then; but no one's going to run them down to me again. What were those white flowers called? Oh, yes, lilies, of course. And I said you looked just like one of them, didn't I? You told me afterwards that you'd been just as nervous as I was, but you couldn't have been really. Nobody could have looked as cool and lovely as you did, if they'd been feeling like me. And then, do you remember, I said would you come up to Lord's the next day, and you said you hadn't got a ticket, and I said I'd give you a hundred if you liked, and you said——"

"I didn't," murmured Lady Sparrow.

"Yes, you did. You said you only needed one. And I said—I suppose I was mad at the time—I said, 'What about your mother?' And you looked at me, and then the whole conservatory went round like a catherine-wheel, and then your hair came down, and I——"

"No, no!" cried Lady Sparrow. "It isn't fair. Mother warned me that you'd try and do this if I let you see me. You must go at once, Dick. I tell you, it's not fair."

"But it *is* fair, B. And even if it isn't, what else do you expect me to say when I see you again after all these weeks? If you've really finished with me, I swear I'll never bother you again. But if you think any man alive would chuck away an opportunity like this—a chance of seeing you alone without Bridger and without your mother and without my rotten new lawyer, whose name I can never remember—then——"

"But, Dick——"

"What?"

"Even if I believed you about that awful evening—even if mother were wrong—you said yourself that you'd been a fool about Mrs. Arden. It was that that hurt me—not that a hideous old frump like that should want to take you away from me, but that you—that you should——"

"That I should what?" asked Sir Richard, with a look of bewilderment.

"That you should go there to tea all those days without telling me."

"But——" Sir Richard's jaw dropped. "How on earth did you find out?"

"M-mother saw it in your engagement-book."

Sir Richard groaned.

"And you thought," he said, "you actually believed that I went there to—to flirt with her! That I could be such an unspeakable idiot as to leave you for an overblown old creature like that! Barbara—darling—didn't you understand?"

"But——"

"It was meant as a surprise for you. You know you were always annoyed because I played bridge so badly. Well, a fellow at the club told me that this Mrs. Arden gave lessons for ten guineas a course. I thought I'd go and learn from her and then on your birthday I would say, 'Can't we have some people in and play bridge?' and then you'd be so bucked at the way I'd come on that we'd be fonder of each other than ever. Of course, if I'd told you what I was doing, it would have given the whole show away. And——"

"But, Dick, you said you'd been a fool about her."

Sir Richard began to laugh.

"Well, so I was," he chuckled. "There had I been paying her ten guineas in advance to improve my game, and all the time she played so dashed rottenly herself that she'd gone and lost five hundred pounds. I should jolly well think I *was* a fool! Why, my dear old B, you don't surely mean to say that—— Here! Hi! I say, what's the matter?"

Silence for a moment in Mr. Besley's waiting-room. Yet during that silence we are perhaps not altogether surprised to find that the Sparrows have got their arms round each other. Nor, a little later, are we completely taken aback to hear a very familiar formula coming from Lady Sparrow's pretty, childish mouth.

"Oh, Dick!" she gasps. "Can you ever forgive me?"

"Why, my darling old thing," exclaims Sir Richard, "if it really *is* all right again, what have I got to forgive? You know, darling," he added, holding his wife more closely than ever, "I'd always heard that women were a bit difficult to understand, and I thought—I thought you'd suddenly got a sickener for me. Of course, I see now that I'd made a mistake, and next time——"

"Oh, no, Dick. I'll never do it again."

"And you'd understand if I looked a bit sulky at your mother—for a day or two?"

"Of course, darling."

"And at old Bridger?"

"I wish you would."

"And at Johnnie Panton?"

"Oh, no, Dick. Mr. Panton was trying to make me have you back all the time. He said—he said you were just the sort of fool to make a mess of things if once the lawyers got hold of you."

"Did he?" exclaimed Sir Richard. "Well, I call that jolly good of him. I'll remember that, B. I'll—I know what I'll do; I'll put him on to an absolute snip that I've got for Sandown next week."

Lady Sparrow's eyes shone.

"Oh, Dick," she cooed. "You're the most wonderful man in the whole——"

Another gurgle from Mr. Besley's black marble clock cut her short.

"I say," said Sir Richard, as it struck two, "what about giving old Besley a miss, eh? What about going off somewhere and having a regular blow-out of a lunch? I simply couldn't have any more toothache on a day like this."

"Oh, do let's," said Lady Sparrow, giving him a last kiss. And then: "Dick," she added, "I've got something else to tell you. It—I knew it was coming before you went away, but I was keeping it as a surprise. You'd always said you'd wanted one, and I had thought perhaps it would draw us closer together, and——"

"Tell me, darling," he murmured eagerly.

"It was a kind of present for you," said Lady Sparrow, lowering her eyes. "It—it came the very day after I'd turned you out."

"*What?*" cried Sir Richard, with a look of amazement.

"Yes, darling. And Rabbitt's been trying to make it work ever since, but I knew all the time that you were the only person who could understand it."

"But what was it?" asked the bewildered husband.

"It's called a three-valve receiving-set, darling. Oh, do say that you're pleased."

"You angel!" said Sir Richard. "We'll listen-in to the Children's Stories together this very evening. And, darling——"

"Yes?"

"We won't ever need to play bridge again now. Will we?"

Lady Sparrow threw her husband a ravishing smile.

"Never," she said. "In future we'll play nothing but roulette."

And thus, still holding each other's hands, they passed out through the dark entrance-hall into the street.

EVEN a short story may have an epilogue. Here is the epilogue to this one:—

"*To Sir Richard Sparrow, Bart.,*
122, Charles Street, Mayfair.

"*Mr. W. H. Besley presents his compliments and begs to name the sum of six guineas due for professional services on March 17th. (Appointments booked and cancelled without notice.)*"

THE CHILD AND THE CINEMA

by DR C.W. KIMMINS

(Member of the Cinema Commission, Chairman of the Cinema Education Committee.)

THE CALL OF THE CINEMA.

THE cinema has opened up a new world to the child, and it is, for good or ill, having a far-reaching effect not only upon his mental development but upon his general outlook on life. This is especially true in the case of the poor child reared in sordid surroundings, to whom the variety of activities in the streets constituted, in days gone by, the main out-of-school possibilities for physical and mental development. The price of entry and the distance ruled out the music-hall and the theatre from his sphere of operations except on the very rare occasions of financial good fortune. Now everything is changed; there are picture-houses in every locality, and the child for a few pence can obtain two or three hours' entertainment of the most varied description. That the cinema has come to stay there can be no possible doubt, and we must make the best of it.

The call of the street is now giving way to the call of the cinema, and the harsh critic of the lure of the cinema should attempt to realize the nature of the alternative for the child. To the child living in dreary streets it must be a great joy to escape for a short time from his drab and monotonous surroundings and find on the screen something which joins up in some mysterious way with that fairyland existence in which even the dweller in mean streets loves to dwell. In the more exciting scenes of the cinema there is, in fact, a great resemblance to the fairy story. The miraculous escapes of the hero or heroine who triumphs over apparently impossible obstacles, climbing up chimneys, rushing along perilously difficult pathways on the roofs of houses, successfully negotiating wonderful leaps from point to point, sometimes even defying the laws of gravity, give a succession of sensational situations even greater than those of the favourite fairy story. The ever-present motor-car,

which always exceeds the speed limit and can travel as rapidly backwards as forwards, plays an important part in the inevitable happy ending; and the faithful bloodhound who conveys the important letter, and releases the hero by gnawing through the ropes that bind him, gives that indication of a high standard of intelligence which is generally confined to animals in fairy stories.

THE APPEAL TO THE CHILD.

In preparation for evidence to be given to the Cinema Commission the writer made an investigation of the type of film which made the greatest appeal to children of different ages in selected schools in poor and well-to-do districts. In this way he obtained six thousand seven hundred accounts of favourite films, a large proportion of which were well and graphically described and showed clearly that the children could give detailed connected narratives of the films they had seen though no notice was given of the essays to be written, and there was therefore no preparation possible. The children also were limited to fifteen minutes for the descriptions, so that the points which attracted them most were alone recorded. The main groups yielded the following results: Domestic and fairy stories, twenty-five per cent.; adventure films, fifteen per cent.; comic films, fifteen per cent.; war films, eleven per cent.; crook films, five per cent.; and, at the bottom of the list, educational films, two per cent. There were, of course, great differences between the records of the boys and the girls. The most striking result, however, was that from the investigation it appeared that no less than ninety-two per cent. of the children went to the cinema. In the poor districts, out of more than three thousand children only thirty-two boys and fifty girls had not visited a picture-house. The reasons for not doing so were given in some cases, and here are samples from children of nine, ten, and thirteen years of age respectively:—

(*a*) "My reasons for not going to cinemas are that the heat gives me a headache. I also found out that germs like the dark and so cinemas are unhealthy, so father and mother decided I had better not go. I like books very much, and having many at home I do not want to go."

(*b*) "I have never been to cinemas. Last year my two sisters went, and in two or three days one had scarlet fever and the other had measles, and so mother would not let me go because she thought I might get it."

(*c*) "I do not go to the pictures because of these reasons: 1. I save money by stopping at home. 2. It don't do your eyes any good. 3. It is not healthy to be stuck inside a hot place taking other people's breath."

In some cases the children did not hesitate to criticize the films very severely; *e.g.*: "Some pictures are degrading and they do not do one any good, but they help to make the people who see them less pure and have less moral support. These pictures are only shown in cheap and degraded picture palaces and are only supported by the people of inferior education. Some pictures are so degrading that they never ought to have been passed by the censor."

THE FAVOURITE FILMS OF CHILDREN.

Some children describe the type of film preferred. The following examples show that they differ widely in the nature of the appeal:—

(*a*) "The pictures I like best are dramas, but not too sad. I like about when people get bankrupt. A lady has to marry a person she does not like in order to get her father's business back. She loves another gentleman and she tells him her trouble. Then just as they are going to the church a telegram boy comes to say that her uncle has died and that she is an heiress. Then she marries her real young man. Her father is then able to keep his business on."

(*b*) "The picture I like best is like a meadow. It has flowers and little hills. Why I like it is because it makes you think that you are in the country yourself. It also learns you your nature study."

(*c*) "The picture that I like was not a funny story nor a drama, but just views of water waving and curling and also some falls. It gave some most beautiful falls and fountains splashing and sparkling in sunny France. The water first turned a beautiful blue and then on the fountains it sparkled with a silver tint. Then came the fall with its beautiful waters jumping and bubbling over sharp stones and rocks, making many pools of white foam. Another picture was the river, and sometimes it did not sparkle but was dark and sullen."

(*d*) "I have an æsthetic taste for scenery, and one of the best pictures I have seen is 'Doran's Travels in China.' This young lady travelled on the tranquil winding river. The mountains glistened in the sun and the traveller stood amazed at the wondrous spectacle. The people in the massive buildings were similar to the ancient people of years ago. The beautiful scenery helps to uplift one to purer thoughts. It helps to give one a better idea of the world and gives one ideas of different countries."

In some cases a lamentable ignorance of

country life was shown; *e.g.*: "There was a lady who had a little boy and girl; the only cattle they had was a pony, two hens, and a dog."

In other accounts the phraseology was very quaint; a good example of this is the following:—

"There was a gentleman who was very much in love with a beautiful lady, and he asked her to be his wife, but she replied in the negative. Some time afterwards the lady was in great danger and the gentleman saved her life. Again he asked her to be his wife; this time she replied in the affirmative."

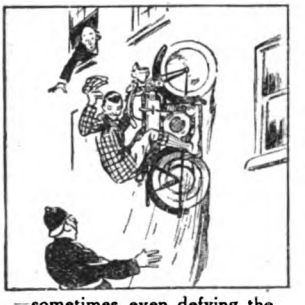
It was found in the investigation of favourite films that those of purely comic interest were selected by fifteen per cent. of the children. They were much more popular with the boys than the girls, and with both there was a great falling off in popularity at the age of twelve years. Above this age the tendency was to select films dealing with stories of adventure by the boys and love interest by the girls.

Naturally the Charlie Chaplin element dominated the situation in the selection of comic films. Apart from the extraordinary ability of this very clever artist, his remarkable insight into the mental make-up of the child ensures for him an abiding popularity. The great point of difference between the boys' and girls' favourite films is that the girls are much more interested in domestic and fairy stories than boys, and are less interested than them in cowboy stories and adventures.

The miraculous escapes of the hero climbing up chimneys—

—rushing along perilously difficult pathways on the roofs of houses—

—successfully negotiating wonderful leaps from point to point—



—sometimes even defying the laws of gravity—

—give a succession of sensational situations even greater than those of the favourite fairy story.

The faithful bloodhound who releases the hero by gnawing through the ropes that bind him.

THE CINEMA SENSE.

During the sitting of the Cinema Commission the members made it a practice, when possible, to visit cinema theatres in order to become increasingly familiar with the subject under discussion. The experience was general among members that their difficulties in following the more intricate portions of the films were not shared by those children present who were cinema *habitués*. These children have undoubtedly acquired a power of readily interpreting visual scenes so as to form a connected narrative, which power was denied to the uninitiated members of the commission. This was fully confirmed by the experience of the writer, who had an opportunity of reading the children's accounts of some well-known films which made clear and intelligible to him many points he had failed to understand.

The possession of the "cinema sense," with its ready and accurate interpretation of visual stimuli, might prove a valuable asset in many interesting situations. Thus, for example, in diagnosing correctly the full significance of the warning look of parent or teacher, troubles in the immediate future might be averted. The cinema screen affords excellent opportunities for the training and exercise of this power.

THE CHILD'S LOVE OF DETAIL.

At twelve years of age the child has a wonderful love of detail and has a remarkable

capacity for crowding the essential material of a story into a small compass. The following record, which also fulfils the demand for a happy ending required at this age, is typical :—

" 'The House of Fear' was the moving picture I enjoyed most. It was a drama in four acts, but it was not so long as some dramas. It was about a very old lady named Mrs. White, who was bedridden. She had only one child, a girl named Margaret, who was married to a certain Mr. Fairley, who had no relatives. Margaret had one child named Elsie, who was thirteen months old. Soon after Elsie's second birthday her father was accidentally shot through the head and died immediately. Her mother, hearing of her husband's sudden death, is taken very ill and dies soon afterwards. She then lived with her grandmother until she was turned five, knowing but little of her parents' death. In her ninety-ninth year Mrs. White dies, leaving the child in the care of an uncle who is her godfather, but the uncle was a miser and did not wish to keep her. After the funeral of her grandmother, Elsie is brought before a meeting in her house and the uncle is asked to keep his promise. He does not wish to, but in the end, wishing not to appear ungrateful, he consents. In the end Elsie is married to her uncle's nephew, and here we leave her with a good husband, a comfortable home, and two children."

The number of facts contained in this story is positively bewildering.

A year later stories with a moral become popular, and the love of detail, though slightly on the wane, is still above the normal.

Here is an example in the account of the reformation of a beer-drinker :—

" Once when I went to a cinema I saw a picture about a little girl named Mary whose mother was very ill and whose father was a drunkard. One night her father comes home very drunk and aimed a jug at his wife, and when Mary saw it she ran away. Presently she came to a motor and got under the covering and went to sleep. Later a gentleman got in who was very rich and whose *fiancée* had broken off her engagement with him because he drank beer. When he got in the motor he put his feet on the cover and woke Mary up. He sat her on his lap, but she said, 'I don't like you; your breath smells like my daddy's.' He took her home with him, determined never to touch beer again."

THE EDUCATIONAL FILM.

At the meetings of the Cinema Commission the evidence of witnesses was practically unanimous as to the value of the cinema educationally for purposes of nature study and for geography by means of travel films. In other subjects there was a great diversity of opinion. The educational film has in the past been severely handicapped by the imperative need of performing a double function, viz., the presentation of the subject illustrated must be of sufficient popular interest to be acceptable to a non-scientific audience and frequently necessitating the elimination of the elements which would be of the greatest interest to the student. If it went to the other extreme it would leave the popular audience cold, if not antipathetic. Thus, in spite of the most praiseworthy attempts to perform a double function, the educational film has fallen far short of complete success. Naturally the film producer has had to consider the claims of his larger *clientèle*.

For purposes of "atmosphere" the popular film can safely be used. Children starting on a study of India, for example, would derive considerable benefit from seeing a popular Indian film showing the normal conditions of town and country life in that country. In history teaching of a particular period trustworthy films giving satisfactory scenes of the mode of life and costumes of the period would produce the requisite atmosphere, which would be of very great value.

In another direction the film may prove of the greatest possible benefit to the child. By its means Sir Ernest Shackleton was able to bring before the children of this country, to their great delight, the most thrilling and fascinating events of Arctic exploration; scenes, of which any verbal description would have been utterly inadequate, became as real and full of interest as if the actual adventures had been witnessed. The film showing in the fullest detail the attempt to reach the summit of Mount Everest, which has been seen by thousands of children, is another example of the extraordinary value of this method of education. Further, the memory of Major Dugmore's marvellous film of "The Wonderland of Big Game" will long remain a priceless possession of every boy, with a healthy love of adventure, who has seen it.

That the memory of the moving image is retained longer than that of the static image has, by a recent investigation, been proved beyond doubt.

In some directions of scientific inquiry the cinema has already "made good." In slow biological and physiological processes where these can be subjected to long exposure to the recording apparatus the changes can, by speeding-up the film produced, be examined with care in every detail and at leisure, and, moreover, these

changes can be seen again and again in operation. The great advantage of such a labour-saving method of conducting an investigation, to say nothing of its great efficiency, is very obvious.

Recent improvements in cinema projectors have made it possible for any portion of the film to be kept on the screen, without risk of burning, for a sufficiently long time for exposition by the teacher. This marks a great advance in the possibility of the film being used in the school for educational purposes.

In the investigation of the favourite films of children it was found that twenty-five per cent. selected domestic or fairy story films. Of the fairy stories there can be no question. The films are generally of good quality and are deservedly popular. In the domestic stories there is great variety—some are quite worthless and others are positively harmful for children. The great triangle of two men and one woman or two women and one man frequently constitutes the basis for the story depicted. The morbid film dealing with marital infidelity should, by common consent, be excluded from performances to which children are admitted. The domestic stories, however, selected by the children were in most cases of quite a healthy character, and occasionally represented extracts from well-filmed popular novels. Less ambitious productions of no literary value, containing a considerable amount of boisterous fun, are common. The fun is generally limited to material with continual change of action and the special kind of comical incident which can best be represented by cinema methods.

Here is a record of a typical film of this nature :—

"The moving picture I liked best was a gentleman advertised in a paper for a lady friend, and in a class of young ladies one read it in the paper and ran out of the room, another also read the article and also left the room; one by one they all disappeared and went to the gentleman's house. When they all came he did not want everyone and he then started to run away. During different pictures it is shown that he runs into woods and hides behind trees, all of them trying to catch him but not one succeeding. He continues to run up hills, over ragged rocks, sometimes falling over, but always picking himself up and continuing. The women also stumble over many large boulders, but they never seem to mind. It shows him running along a pier, and unable to escape he dives into the sea, all the women following him. There was quite a band of bobbing heads all trying to get to him, but as he had a start none succeeded. He swims to land and races across open

All the young ladies trying to catch him, but not one succeeding.

country, all the others following him. He is then seen climbing on the top of railway carriages with the others behind him. At last, tired out, he reaches home again, to find that his wife, who had run away, had come back again. The others leave very sorrowful at their disappointment."

It was very evident from the number of films of this type selected by children of ten to twelve years of age that this rapid change of scene crowded with incident is particularly popular at this period.

THE CINEMA AND THE THEATRE.

Professor Munsterberg in his little book on "The Photo-Play" claims for the cinema the position of a new art. Undoubtedly the "close-up," with its intense magnification, when appropriately used has great emotional effect, and the "cut-back" with its comparison, without mental effort, of past with present can produce very remarkable results, and the cinema has, in this respect, a great advantage over the theatre. It is frequently urged that these adjuncts reduce the amount of mental effort required in an ordinary performance. This is true, but if the objective is recreation and not education in the normal cinematographic performance, surely this is an advantage. The result is that, especially for the young child, the cinema performance is far less tiring than that of the theatre, as it demands only a limited amount of concentration, which is the child's greatest difficulty. In this connection it may be interesting to note that in the writer's investigation of children's dreams he found that the exciting book read before going to bed had a much greater effect on the dream than the cinema film.

The long waits in the theatre between the acts of the play and the burden on the memory in remembering and comparing the incidents of the last act with those of the first are absent in the cinema. The child prefers continuous action and variety to the sustained effort of a long performance.

Appropriate music in the cinema, quite apart from its value in supporting and emphasizing the material on the screen, serves a very useful purpose in bringing into play auditory stimuli, and thus relieving what would otherwise be a purely visual experience. It is fully recognized that a running commentary by a good film lecturer adds enormously to the effectiveness of a film, and greatly increases its educational value.

Beautiful scenery has a healthy and beneficent effect upon the child mind and is much appreciated. This is clearly shown in the early part of this article, where examples are given of the keen æsthetic appreciation of young children, who, having all their cinema experiences for selection of their favourite films, chose those which impressed them most by the beauty of the natural setting. This appeal is naturally greater to the child of a crowded city, to whom the glories of the country appear as a new experience. Here the cinema will always have a great advantage over the theatre. However expert the scenic artist and however elaborately the scene in a theatre may be staged, the result must always be tawdry and commonplace as compared with a natural background in a beautiful country.

SUSPICION

by

W. B. MAXWELL

ILLUSTRATED BY W. HATHERELL R.I.

OLD Mrs. Mayhew lived with her nephew in that still unchanged part of Tudor Green which lies between the High Street and the river; and if you ran through the population of the whole suburb you would not meet a kinder person.

"Richard, I see what it is," she said to the nephew. "I am in for one of my big tidyings"; and she laughed good-humouredly.

For some time she had been missing things and saying, "Of course I know it's safe, but I simply cannot find it high or low"; saying also, as people so often observe on such occasions, that she believed some naughty imp of darkness gets into inanimate objects and helps them to hide themselves.

"Or are *you* the naughty imp, Aunt Kate?"

This gently facetious question alluded to the fact that Mrs. Mayhew had a trick of stowing away her little treasures with the greatest possible care and then forgetting where she had put them.

"Don't be a tease, Dick. Yes, I'll have a real tidy-up. It's long overdue—only I have shirked the effort. But I'll be brave; I shall enjoy it when once I'm fairly started."

Now, on a summer morning, when Dick, who was a student at the London University, had just gone off to the railway station, she became brave and attacked the task. It was one of those sparkling joyous mornings on which people find a difficulty in not feeling happy, and Mrs. Mayhew, as she pulled out the contents of a large cupboard in the spare bedroom, felt extraordinarily happy.

She had so much for which to be thankful. Deep in her benevolent and affectionate heart she offered thanks for this snug little Georgian house that had come to her from her parents with all its nice old furniture; for dear Dick, her nephew, doing so well in his studies and going to do so well in life; for this shelf of wine-glasses and decanters, lying in reserve against future needs, these dress lengths bought at drapers' sales and not yet made up, these lamp-shades, these friendly familiar odds and ends; for her pleasant acquaintances and trusted neighbours; for Mrs. Skeat, her cook—whose mellow voice she had just heard floating up to her from the comfortable depths of the house, as the good soul spoke to Doris on the kitchen stairs.

Each opened drawer of a tall chest set free a dozen memories. Here, folded in tissue paper, was a broken desk that she had used as a little girl; here was a leather portfolio that belonged to her father. Ah! Here was grandmamma's church-service, bound with two pieces of yellow ivory—one of the pieces unglued, loose. She sighed. Poor grandmamma!

"But this won't do," she said to herself. "I must not waste time. I must get on with it—methodically"; and she bustled back to her own bedroom, pausing to look down into the hall as she crossed the landing.

Down there Doris, the house-parlourmaid, was singing softly as she dusted the panels. She looked neat and nice in her lavender print dress—a beam of sunlight from the glass over the front door making her hair shine like polished bronze. The sight of the girl and the sound of her song were very pleasant to the eyes and ears of the kind mistress.

Time passed—an hour, more. Mrs. May-

Copyright, 1923, by W. B. Maxwell.

hew had fairly started, but she was not enjoying it. She could not find the missing articles.

"Mrs. Skeat! Mrs. Skeat!" She had been ringing her bell, and she leaned over the baluster of the staircase. "Oh, Doris, please ask Mrs. Skeat to come up to me."

The faithful cook—"my sheet anchor," as Mrs. Mayhew always described her—came up the stairs slowly and heavily, breathing hard; and she stood by her mistress, who was on her knees, slightly agitated, a little dusty, and dishevelled.

"Mrs. Skeat, those things I'm looking for. I can't find them. They're gone."

"Gone!" said Mrs. Skeat, stolidly. "How can they be gone, ma'am?"

"Well, that's what I ask myself. That's what's upsetting me. I—I believe they have been *taken*."

"Taken!" said Mrs. Skeat in the same tone. Then she smiled tolerantly. "Who should have taken them, ma'am?"

"I don't know," said Mrs. Mayhew, helplessly. "It's very odd—mysterious even. I can't understand."

"What is it exactly what you've mislaid, ma'am?"

Mrs. Mayhew told her—a china bon-bon dish that had been given to her last Christmas, four yards of silk brocade from a spring sale, a cup and saucer that she had intended to present to a godchild on the little girl's fourth birthday, and so on. "But that's not all. I seem now to miss dozens and dozens of things."

"I expect you've put 'em by somewhere."

"Come into Mr. Richard's room"; and Mrs. Mayhew scrambled to her feet. "Come and see the state of the corner cupboard."

"You haven't lugged that open too? Why, his wash-stand was blocking the door."

"I pulled it away. Mrs. Skeat, that cupboard that used to be so full is half empty."

"Jiminy!" said Mrs. Skeat, and she ceased to smile and became very serious. "Let me look, ma'am. Seeing's believing."

They went into Dick's room. Here in the corner there was a deep cupboard that had served as a sort of final stronghold; into it went things that might not be wanted for ages, things one knew one would never use again but did not care to sell; things good in themselves yet somehow become disgraced or hopelessly out of fashion—as, for instance, the big blue and gold vases from the dining-room chimney-piece, the Neptune clock, disliked by Dick; the ice-making machine that would not make ices. That imbecile apparatus was still there, but none of the other things rapidly enumerated by Mrs. Mayhew. The cupboard showed itself more than half empty.

"No two ways," said Mrs. Skeat, with portentous gravity. "This has bin *got* at."

THEN they both sat down to talk about the mystery—Mrs. Mayhew nervous, agitated, moving her hands; Mrs. Skeat solemn but unemotional, with her hands resting quietly on her tremendous knees. She was a very large woman, and her broad fat face, of a naturally bright complexion, had grown pallid and lustreless in the course of years, gathering to itself, moreover, some ugly patches of a purple or copper tint; she made a noise in breathing because of her tendency to asthma; and she was untidy to the edge of slovenliness in regard to her attire—altogether, it must be confessed, not a cook-housekeeper to win you by external charm if you met her seeking a new situation at a registry office. But for her mistress she was simply Mrs. Skeat—neither more nor less. "My sheet anchor, as I call her." Now, as always, something tranquillizing and reassuring seemed to flow from her. Merely to listen to her speaking so imperturbably and sensibly rendered one calmer.

"Robbers—burglars! Mrs. Skeat, we might all have been murdered in our beds."

"Oh, no, ma'am, let's keep within bounds," said Mrs. Skeat. "This is pilfering, not housebreaking. You may be sure it's bin pinched in daylight hours," and almost immediately she suggested a certain milkman as the probable culprit.

But Mrs. Mayhew, after entertaining the notion for a few moments, dismissed it. Impossible. The milkman transacted business on the basement level and never by any chance could have come upstairs to the bedrooms.

Then Mrs. Skeat suggested some painters and plumbers; and then, as if with an inspiration, she offered a name. "Bradley! You may depend on it, it's Bradley."

Bradley was a man who used to do odd jobs for them. He had now left the neighbourhood.

"No," said Mrs. Mayhew. "Bradley had a heart of gold. I often talked to him about his wife and children."

"I never liked him," said Mrs. Skeat. "And remember, ma'am, how he was allowed to prowl all over the house—upstairs here, just as much as down below."

Mrs. Mayhew leaped to her feet again, under the stress of a new thought. "Downstairs! We must look if anything has gone from the ground floor."

The rest of the morning was a nightmare. Things were missing from the drawing-room. How many things Mrs. Mayhew could not

say. She could not remember, she could not think, because of her agitation. But without the slightest doubt a painted snuff-box had gone from the panelled wall beside the hearth, and out of a table with a glass top had been taken a tiny Chinese fan and an antique silver punch ladle. With a hand held to her trembling lips, she vowed that she was nearly certain she had seen the ladle, in its proper place under the glass, less than a week ago.

"Well, well. It's the old story," said Mrs. Skeat, in a lugubriously philosophical tone. "Too much furniture and too many ornaments—so's you reely don't know half the time what you *have* got or what you *haven't* got," and she moved towards the door.

"Oh, don't leave me, Skeat!"

"Back in a minute," and Mrs. Skeat, mindful of routine duties even in the hour of crisis, went to the kitchen stairs and called down them. "Doris! Put the chicken pie in the oven and the potatoes on the fire."

Alone in the drawing-room, Mrs. Mayhew had been seized with a fresh and most atrocious fear. She rushed to a delightful Queen Anne bureau in which she kept some sacred relics.

"Thank heavens!"

The small velvet case was there. But as she opened it she uttered a cry. The case was empty. The locket—her greatest treasure—the locket with her father's portrait—had disappeared.

"Well, well," said Mrs. Skeat. "Upon my word! What next?" She seemed at the end of her consolatory resources, and was unable to do more than make exclamations. "There! Well, indeed!" At last she resumed her philosophical tone. "Fortunately, it isn't of no very large value itself—that is, I think I've heard you say so. Not real gold."

"I would sooner have lost my right hand," said poor Mrs. Mayhew, with the exaggeration of despair; and then in a distraught manner she told Mrs. Skeat not to say a word about the catastrophe to anybody.

"Oh! Not mention it to Doris?"

"No. Not a word to anybody—at least, not till I have had Mr. Richard's advice."

"Very good, ma'am."

Then Mrs. Mayhew sat by herself and suffered. She was overwhelmed by her discovery; it was altogether too big for her; it shook her quiet, peaceful life to its very foundations. Above all else, she suffered from the inrush of suspicion; suspicion, dark, voluminous, irresistible, creeping through her mind—taking possession of it, filling it—filling it so completely that the old good trustful thoughts had no space left for them, and after trying to make themselves small, smaller still, gave way and were driven out.

She could not eat the chicken pie or the potatoes, and Doris looked at her with sympathetic anxiety as she nibbled her biscuits and cheese. And when Doris was not watching her, she was watching Doris. All at once she yielded to an impulse, and doing what she had said was not to be done, she told Doris of the trouble. She chose a moment when Doris was busy at the sideboard with her back to the table.

"Yes, Doris, those are the circumstances. Of course, it means that we have had a series of thefts."

"Thefts!" Doris had become deadly pale, and she turned a scared face to the table. "Oh, ma'am, how dreadful!"

"You understand I'm not blaming you for negligence—or anything."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Doris, falteringly.

LATE in the afternoon, when Richard came home and heard the news, he asked at once, "What does Mrs. Skeat say?"

"She thinks it was Bradley."

"Oh, no."

"That's what I say myself. But, if not—Oh, Richard, what are we to do?"

"Why, obviously, inform the police."

"The police! Would you really tell the police?"

Richard said certainly he would tell them without a minute's delay; and Mrs. Mayhew, although appalled at this widening and opening out of the affair, felt a great if temporary relief in hearing his decision. Perhaps not till that moment had she realized that her dear Richard was quite grown up. There was comfort in having him solid and firm to lean upon—a *man*. Big and substantial as Mrs. Skeat could claim to be, she was after all only another woman.

"All right. Yes, I agree. But tell them, Dick dear, it's the locket. The locket's all I really care about. And say if I can only get that back I don't want to be vindictive or have all the fuss and cruelty of prosecuting the thief. I would even pay him—give him a reward——"

Richard walked across the Green to the police-station. As he passed from all the noise and traffic of the crowded High Street into the quiet, dimly-lighted hall he had an impression commonly felt by such innocent visitors that he was touching the outer, smaller wheels of a vast and terrible machine concerning the work of which he knew nothing and wished to know nothing. Instinctively he spoke in a low, grave voice as he narrated his business.

A genial inspector without a cap and a sunburnt constable without a helmet listened

attentively. They promised at once to send notices round to all the pawnbrokers of the district; the usual questions were asked; and then the constable slowly wrote it down in a book.

"Gold locket," said the constable, writing. "Real gold?"

"As to that I am not positive. We always spoke of it as gold."

"Gold or imitation," wrote the constable. "Surrounded by small pearls. Real pearls?"

"No, I doubt if they are."

"Sham pearls. Very good, sir. Contents of locket?"

"A small photograph, coloured by hand; the portrait of my great-uncle—name, Captain Leonard Mayhew—shown in military uniform, with the old-fashioned epaulettes—white-haired and——"

"Image of a male person," wrote the constable, condensing the description. "Very good, sir."

And so it went on.

Finally the genial inspector asked, "No suspicion of anyone?"

"No. None."

"What about the servants in the house?"

"We only keep two."

"No reason to suspect either of them?"

There was the slightest pause or hesitation before Dick replied:—

"No. No reason."

"Nothing detrimental in their past history?"

Again Dick hesitated, and the inspector looked hard at him.

"No," said Dick, firmly. "Nothing whatever."

"That is, not to your knowledge?"

"No."

Then Dick delivered his aunt's message about being content with the restoration of the property; but the inspector waved that away severely. Condoning of felonies was not, of course, his line at all.

"I see," said Dick, feebly. "Ah, then, is there anything more I can do?"

"No, sir," said the inspector, with restored geniality. "It's up to *us* to do something now. We'll keep you informed—should there be further developments. Good evening, sir."

IT was still only twilight when he got home and gave his aunt a report of the interview. She was in the front room—the dining-room—looking out of the window, waiting for him. Amongst other things he told her of his embarrassment when questioned so searchingly.

"Of course," he said, dropping his voice to a whisper, "I didn't let out a word about Doris. But I suppose you have thought of her—as a possibility?"

"Dick, I cannot—I *will* not suspect Doris"; and Mrs. Mayhew began to walk about the dusky room.

"No, Aunt Kate. I don't want to suspect her either. But one remembers what people say"; and his whispered words were only just audible. "'Once a thief, always a thief.' One can't help thinking of that."

Mrs. Mayhew went back to her seat by the window, and with the night falling on the front garden, the lime trees, and the vague expanse of the Green, she thought of it. Indeed, she had thought of it, consciously or unconsciously, ever since the trouble began.

Doris had been a thief—as a young girl, with all sorts of extenuating circumstances. She had been convicted, imprisoned, rescued. She had been taken into the household of a noble and philanthropic lady, trained as a servant; then she had come here; and, for two and a half years it had been a pride and joy in Mrs. Mayhew's life to find her honest, respectable, grateful, devoted—as good a girl as ever breathed. The fact of her early lapse was only known to four people—to Mrs. Mayhew, Dick, Mrs. Skeat, and to her lover and future husband. It was Doris herself who had insisted that the young man should be told, and Mrs. Mayhew had done it—here in this room. For a minute or so the young man had seemed to waver; he had stood at this window, with his back turned, as if struggling with himself; then he had said it was all right and he would overlook the past.

"That's fine of you," said Mrs. Mayhew, delighted. "Now run down to her and take her mind off the rack."

"No," said the young man loudly, almost as it seemed aggressively. "*You* go down and tell her you've told me—and strike me dead if I ever mention it—much less throw it in her face. Tell her"—and he made quite a dignified gesture—"that I don't want any allusions to it on her side either."

Mrs. Mayhew obeyed him, and when presently he himself went down she heard him speak cheerily to the girl, just in his usual way: "What, ain't you got your hat on yet? Where's our walk?" A fine fellow! Mrs. Mayhew had been touched.

"Dick," she cried now, "turn on the lights. Oh, turn on the lights. It's this horrible suspicion—like—like a dark cloud—making one ready to believe anything."

"Just so," said Dick, moving the switches; and they stood blinking at each other, dazzled by the sudden glare.

"Nevertheless——"

"One moment," said Dick; and he cautiously opened the door, and shut it after making sure there was nobody in the hall. "Yes?"

"I would sooner have lost my right hand," said poor Mrs. Mayhew, with the exaggeration of despair.

And they whispered again, as though they had been two conspirators.

"It's nothing really—but I feel I mustn't keep it back from you. When I told her what I'd missed she turned as white as my table napkin. She seemed *frightened.*"

"Oh! And you read that up as a sign of guilt?"

"How can I say?" whispered Mrs. Mayhew, tragically. "What *are* the signs of guilt? Naturally she would be upset—and the fear of being suspected might make her look queer."

"Exactly." Dick raised his voice and spoke in an obstinate, a dogged tone. "I pin my faith on Doris. Is it likely that she would jeopardize—— What temptation?"

"Well, she's scraping up all the money she can for her marriage."

"Oh!" Dick was now walking about the room, and in one of those flashes of his imaginative thought he seemed to see a door with the word "Cells" above it. He spoke hesitatingly and rather huskily. "Aunt Kate—if she *had* been mad enough—— Well, we wouldn't give her up, would we? We'd try to shield her?"

THEY slept little that night, and Mrs. Mayhew passed a quietly distracted day while Dick was turning an inattentive ear to his University lecturers.

On the morning of the next day, after starting for the railway station, he ran back to the house and told his aunt he had met the police inspector, who had expressed himself as satisfied in the possession of "a clue" which might speedily lead to developments. The inspector enjoined complete secrecy and begged that Dick and his aunt would not attempt to take any steps on their own account. The police desired a clear field.

"I thought you ought to know," said Dick, and he ran across the Green again.

Mrs. Mayhew became more agitated than ever, and an hour later, alone with Mrs. Skeat in the dining-room, she ignored the inspector's professional request. Mrs. Skeat asked if anything had been done about that man Bradley, and when she heard that the affair had now passed into the hands of the police she sat down unbidden. Indeed, it was as if all her strength and stolidity had failed her.

"Oh, ma'am, I don't like that at all. I never thought you and Mr. Richard would go and mix yourselves up with the police"; and she shook her head dolefully and reprovingly. "This house will be given a bad name. We shall have a scandal of it before we're done."

"Yes; but, Mrs. Skeat——"

"It's very unpleasant, you'll admit that, ma'am. Oh, it's very unpleasant. Such a thing has never happened in all my service—not to have any truck with the p'lice. I tell you frank, I don't like it at all." But then she seemed to recover her customary good-natured self-possession. That tolerant smile broadened on her fat face. "I'm silly, I suppose—too old-fashioned. I dessay it's all correct. Yes, no doubt you and Mr. Dick done the right thing—under the circumstances."

The rest of the day was peaceful on its surface. Then in the following afternoon the depths were stirred. Something terrific occurred.

It was Doris's afternoon out. Mrs. Mayhew had been lying down, endeavouring to make up for another sleepless night, and when she issued from her room just before tea-time, Mrs. Skeat spoke to her from above on the top floor.

"Will you please step up here, ma'am?"

Mrs. Mayhew went up the short, steep flight of stairs to the top landing, and Mrs. Skeat pointed to the open door of Doris's bedroom.

"Go in there, ma'am, if you please," said Mrs. Skeat.

She was stolid enough now, yet portentously solemn too; breathing hard, and holding Mrs. Mayhew, dominating her with severe eyes.

Mrs. Mayhew went into the bedroom.

It was neat and tidy, like Doris herself, clean and spotless; the boards about the square of carpet shining, smelling of soap as if they had been recently washed; on the painted chest of drawers two or three photographs looking pathetic in their cheap frames; and on the narrow mantel-shelf an alarum clock, ticking slower but not less loudly than Mrs. Mayhew's heart-beats. She knew what she was about to hear said. She seemed to have dreamed all this, or to have acted it many years ago. The girl's little tin trunk had been pulled from under the bed by Mrs. Skeat; it stood there with the key in the lock, and the huge inexorable woman pointed at it with a finger.

"Some of the lost property is inside."

"But I shouldn't think of searching her boxes. Certainly not. I have no right."

"Oh, yes, ma'am, *if* you please"; and Mrs. Skeat stooped over the box. "Seeing's believing."

"Did—did she leave the key like that?"

"Not she. Hidden. I bin hunting for it all afternoon."

Reluctant, shrinking, but dominated, Mrs. Mayhew was compelled to see. There were layers of clean white petticoats, print frocks, other garments, and Mrs. Skeat dived her great bare fore-arm down at the side of the box, much as you may see a

stern Customs officer with the baggage of a suspected traveller, raising each layer deftly until she had disclosed the lowest layer of all. On this reposed the silver punch ladle, a china vase, and the piece of brocade."

"Have you seen?"

"Yes, I've seen," said Mrs. Mayhew, shivering and drawing away.

"Very good."

Mrs. Skeat replaced the layers, shut the box, locked it, and pushed it under the bed. "You know what my opinion has always bin. Remember what I told you when you engaged her—you'd live to regret it."

•

DORIS had returned from her outing. She had taken off her hat and scarf; she was here with Mrs. Mayhew and Dick in the dining-room; and they had accused her.

"No, no, sir. No, ma'am. Never on this earth. Nothing. Not one single thing. Believe me, I'd have died sooner. Oh, how can you think it after all you've done for me?"

Her flustered denials were most pitiful to hear. She chattered volubly, she twisted her body, she brandished her arms; her face was white, with the features working in a spasmodic manner. She looked guilt personified.

"But I tell you the things were found in your box. How do you account for that?"

"I can't—I can't account."

"How did they come there?"

"I don't know—unless somebody put them there. Oh, sir——" She was wringing her hands, contorting herself, and she said something so palpably absurd that Dick smiled mournfully. "Could I have put them there myself in my sleep? I've been dreaming of it all night long. Could I have done it—unconscious?"

"I'm afraid that explanation is too far-fetched," said Dick, firmly yet gently. "Doris, listen. Stop talking. We appeal to your better feelings—to confess the truth."

Dick was magnificent. Mrs. Mayhew, even in the midst of her great distress, was admiring him, thanking Providence for this tower of strength that had grown up at her side almost imperceptibly.

"Doris," he said again, "confess. Don't think we want to be hard on you, or mean to abandon you—altogether. Trust us and tell us the truth."

"Yes," said Mrs. Mayhew, "we'll try to make excuses. Help me to get back the locket—*that* at least you ought to do. Though even if you don't—well, even then I won't be hard."

But she would not confess. She persisted in her obstinate denials.

Then Dick told her that she was foolish as well as wicked, because the police were busy investigating the thefts.

At this Doris collapsed. It was most painful to see. She made a suffocating sound, half cry, half sob; she seemed to totter, and then sank upon the sofa between the fireplace and the window. She sprawled there, sobbing and moaning, gaspingly lamenting.

"The p'lice! The p'lice! Then I'm done for. What chance can I have against *them*—innocent or not? They'll out with my record. Oh, ma'am! Oh, sir, it's cruel of you—it's downright cruel—when you both knew!"

"But there would be nothing to fear if—"

"Nothing to fear!" and she laughed wildly. "You've never been in their clutch—to say that. Give a dog a bad name——"

"Doris, listen."

Suddenly she came from the sofa, on her knees, scrabbling across the floor, and seized the folds of Mrs. Mayhew's dress. Her face streamed with tears, and frantically she implored Mrs. Mayhew to believe her, to accept her denial, in spite of suspicion, evidence, everything.

"What can I say to her?" cried Mrs. Mayhew.

"I—I don't know," stammered Dick. Notwithstanding his outward aspect of manly fortitude, he felt wretchedly miserable; and as the girl, still on her knees, released Mrs. Mayhew's skirt and flung her arms across the seat of a chair and let her head fall upon her arms, he felt as if he had been physically maltreating her, as if he had been knocking her about with his fists, as if he had thrown her down there on the floor. As he stood over her she seemed to have dwindled from the fairly large Doris that he had always known into a small, weak, quivering creature of no size at all.

"My good girl, pull yourself together. I want to tell you what you must do."

"You needn't tell me," she sobbed. "I know. I shall go and pitch myself into the river. It's all there is left for me to do."

"My dear child, for God's sake don't say such mad things. We are your friends. We mean to be your friends. Get up," and with his arms round her waist he tried to raise her, but she sank down again. "Doris"—and he said something of which his aunt was till then ignorant—"the police are coming this evening. Do you hear? The police may come—within an hour or two—or sooner."

To this point the scene had been painful, but now it became agonizing.

She began to speak of her sweetheart—not to them, but to herself, in a voice of such immeasurable woe that it seemed to

be tearing them to pieces. "Oh, my boy, my own boy! I shall lose you now, after all. If others disgrace me, how can you want me any more? But I loved you so—I loved you so!" It was elemental, heart-destroying, insupportable—like a mother crooning her grief over a dead child, like a soul in torment calling to them across dark rivers from another world. "Oh, my love! Oh, my darling boy!"

"Dick, stop it! I can't bear it!"

"Doris, for Heaven's sake listen to me." He had taken possession of her; forcibly lifting her, he seated her on the chair and held her so that she should not fall off sideways. "Calm yourself. There's no time to lose. You must get away. Go upstairs and pack your things as fast as possible, and get off."

Suddenly Doris seized the folds of Mrs. Mayhew's dress. Her implored her to believe her. "What can I say to

She merely shook her head and gurgled in her throat.

"Doris," cried Mrs. Mayhew, "do what he says. While you're packing he'll fetch you a cab. Or don't pack. We'll send. Give her money, Dick."

"Don't you understand?" Dick shouted. "Delay is dangerous. We cannot save you if you stay. Here—here's two pounds—and this silver—all I've got. I'll send you more. Write to me."

She would not take the money, she would not consent to fly. Obdurate to their frenzied entreaties, she refused the means of escape. After a while she ceased to weep and shake; and then she grew calm, or rather despair seemed to give her a sort of stone-like composure.

"Let them come for me," she said. "I won't run away." As she said this she stood up and put her hand to her forehead. "I sha'n't touch my box. I shall go straight down to the kitchen and wait for them. They'll find me there when they want me," and she crept from the room.

Mrs. Mayhew and Dick sat together then, Dick by the window and his aunt on the sofa, both of them exhausted, shattered. Again dusk was falling. The mass of the lime trees darkened, beneath them it was like a black vault; occasionally people moved along the roadway between the house and the green, each passing figure more vague than the last one.

"Dick, turn on the lights."

"No—if you don't mind—I want to see outside."

face streamed with tears and she frantically her?" cried Mrs. Mayhew.

Ah! He made a little start. More figures. A helmeted figure had shown itself moving along the side wall towards the back entrance; there was another against the garden railing, another farther on. The inspector in his cap, with a person dressed as a civilian, had entered the garden and was ascending the steps.

"They have come," Dick whispered. "They are all round the house."

"Let me in, please, sir," said the inspector, quietly, through the open window; and Dick admitted him and the other person. They went down the kitchen stairs. The inspector would not allow Dick to go with them. He was grave and authoritative, very much in command of the situation.

It was rapid then, violent, terrible, and yet with very little noise to it. One heard the heavy footsteps, the sound of doors being opened and shut—then came a scream, and after that they could catch only a murmur of voices. And then, incredibly sooner than one would have expected, the inspector was upstairs again, in the dining-room, talking loudly, genially, and triumphantly. He had switched on the electric light and Dick and Mrs. Mayhew blinked at him.

"Just as I suspected, ma'am. The thief was nearer home than you thought," and he laughed contentedly. "Well, here's your locket—pawned in the Tide End Road. I just brought the pawnbroker's assistant to identify her—but as soon as he comes into the kitchen she gives a yell and throws up the sponge. Yes, confesses everything. She wants to ask your pardon before we take her away. Will you see her?"

"Yes, if she wishes," said Mrs. Mayhew, faintly.

The inspector went into the hall and shouted:—

"Bring her up."

"Mind you," he said, returning to the room, "we've had our eye on her for a long time. But, of course, you had no suspicions—you were hoodwinked. Oh, she's a bad 'un, and an artful one. Bring her in."

And through the open doorway a constable pushed or led the enormous Mrs. Skeat.

It was she and not Doris who was the thief. Secret drinking, bad company, and a too indulgent mistress—as she now dolefully confessed—had been her downfall. Taking that locket was "a bit of insanity," and as soon as it was missed she had feared that the game was up. But then at the last moment she had tried to save herself by directing suspicion to Doris—"knowing Doris's story."

"Oh, Mrs. Skeat!" said Mrs. Mayhew.

Really there was nothing else that she could say.

The CAT'S-EYE RING

A TALE OF OLD LONDON

by

OLE LUK-OIE

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

. . . . . .

"Ah, take the Cash and let the Credit go."

. . . . . .

The Rubáiyát.

"YES, just one more?" said Cyril, leaning against the end of the marble-topped bar of the crowded "Saloon Lounge," to his friend Arthur seated on the divan in the corner, and added, "Two more of the same, please, Hebe," to the goddess toying with the cash register. He was a healthy, rosy-cheeked, round-faced young feller with no more chin than an apple.

A few moments later the two youths bade her good night and vanished through the swinging doors.

Well satisfied with themselves, they strolled through the brilliantly-lit streets. It was Cyril's birthday. He had dined and theatred his pal, and both were full of the glow of a well-spent evening, especially his guest. Suddenly, as the pair passed under an illuminated clock, the latter clutched Cyril's arm.

"Great beetles, man, see time? Must buzz off, or I'll miss last trail. Well, I've had a toppin' evening, old boy, simply fizzin'. It'll be my turn next."

"Hasn't been so dusty, has it? Glad you've enjoyed yourself. So long. Hallo, what's happened?" added Cyril, for Arthur was busy searching through his pockets with an incipient air of horror.

"By Jove, old boy, believe—believe—I've lost my returl ticket." The speaker again fumbled in his pockets, overcoat, coat, waistcoat, trousers, but since there was no system in his efforts, he searched some pockets three or four times and neglected others. The look of pain on his face grew deeper.

"Well, don't make a song about it," said his host, airily. "Buy another."

"Yesh, but all pockets cleaned out—clean ashwishle."

"Rats!"

"They are, old flick. Some brute has skinned me completely. Must have been when we were listening to nigger in Strand. Not a *sou*, not a match, not a toothpick. Glad I wasn't wearin' watch." He looked up at the clock again. "Shall lose that infernal trail."

"That's all right. I've got lots of money left. Let's see." Cyril pulled out a handful of silver and copper, amongst which was one half-sovereign. "Here you are. You collar the loose change. Half a thick'un'll see me home."

"It's awfully good of you."

"Rot! Here, catch hold. Don't stop to count the money now. Jump into this cab, or you won't do it." He nodded to the driver of the inevitable hansom which had been following the pair. It was before the days of the taxi-thug.

"Half-a-mo', old boy. Don't know how much all this is. S'pose you lose half-sov., you'll be up tree yourself. Take securlity—must have securlity—sort of bisque—up tree—pop that." As Arthur said this he tried to force something into his friend's hand. It dropped on to the pavement, bounced

twice, then rolled into the gutter; but its owner, unheeding, jumped into the cab and shouted, "Livilpool Street—like dever!" and by the time that Cyril had fished the object out of the mud the hansom was slithering round the next corner.

Cyril stood still, somewhat dazed. In one hand he clutched his half-sovereign; in the other he held something which glittered through a coating of slime. When he wiped it he discovered that it was the gaudy cat's-eye ring which Arthur wore on state occasions.

"Silly juggins! What on earth did he do that for?" was his muttered remark, as he slipped the ring on his finger and went on his way towards his own station, wondering if Arthur were in a fit state to go home, and not noticing the small slip of cardboard which he himself had thrown to the ground when withdrawing his cash from his pocket. He strolled leisurely, because he had plenty of time, and magnificently, because he was vastly pleased with things in general. He was nineteen, a man about town, a dog; the world was his oyster, and he had begun to open it.

SCORNING the invitations of the many prowling hansom drivers, he walked on, puffing at his third fourpenny-halfpenny—three for a shilling—cigar. He was cutting it "fat" that evening. So adiposely, indeed, had he already carved things, that his tie, doubtless wishing to share in his rosy outlook, had climbed above the collar of his overcoat, and when he reached the station with three minutes to spare and could not find his own ticket, he was not at all perturbed. After all, he had plenty of money with him. But his search for his ticket took him a minute, and it was another half-minute before the long-haired booking-clerk appeared at the window in response to his rapping and lordly demand.

"Other side," snapped the tired and unsympathetic railway servant. He had not been having an evening off, and had not, speaking metaphorically, had a chance of getting his tie under his ear, which achievement is the outward sign of opportunities seized.

Me lord misliked the minion's tone; and when he reached the other window he was not soothed, after more rapping, to see that it was the same clerk who approached. After all, there was no rush of passengers, and the ill-conditioned brute might have served him at once. Even now it took him another half-minute to get a ticket, and he slapped it down with a sour yawn. But, put out as Cyril was at having to walk round the booking-office for nothing, he was further ruffled at the way his ticket was heaved at him. Momentarily forgetful of the time factor, he determined to stand on his dignity, and, hat at the appropriate angle and cigar stump tilted correspondingly, he slowly drew off a glove and proceeded to search for his money with an exaggerated air of leisure. This had the desired effect of annoying the clerk—who wanted to get backto his accounts, novelette, or interrupted slumber, or to go home—but it did not impress him. On the contrary, it aroused suspicion, and he clutched the piece of cardboard he had just thrown down. The implied insult was so obvious that it could not have been missed by a hibernating armadillo. The action conveyed that the youth inside the window considered it probable that the youth outside the window had no money. Flushing at the insinuation, but still scornful and leisurely, Cyril at length fished out his half-sovereign and tossed it down.

The clerk picked up the coin, examined it, and planked it down again viciously. "I thought as much—I've—'arf—a—mind—to—give—you—in—charge," he said, very distinctly.

To state that the temporary King of London was nonplussed is to express it feebly. He was for a moment petrified. "Wha—what the dooce d'you mean? D'you mean my money is bad?" he spluttered.

"Bad? No. It ain't bad. There's not so much counterfeit about that as there is about you, you bewtay"—this was not the first time that Cyril had been called a beauty during the course of the evening, and upon each occasion the word had been pronounced differently and had possessed a different shade of meaning. "You swagger in 'ere, in a nurry to catch the last train, let on to be the oiled toff, evening-dress, bouquet cigar, first-class, and then weigh in with a bright farthing. Watcher take me for? I knoo yer little game as soon as I see yer blow in. Look here, Colonel, you'd better do a trot all the way 'ome. It's only a short thirty mile—I know the neighbour'ood. Take your Orxford shoes off, if they're tight, and ease your pore feet. Do you a world of good."

"You—you——" stammered the surprised roisterer, now white with passion. But his voice died away as he picked up the coin and examined it. It was a farthing—a very bright farthing! The thing certainly did look fishy, and he could say nothing. As he again—this time hastily—searched his pockets he descended rapidly from his throne. No longer a Royalty, he was merely a young fellow desperately anxious not to miss his last train. It was no use. He could find no more money. It must have been this beastly farthing which he had

thought was a half-sovereign when he was so lavishly pressing silver on to Arthur. He had nothing of value on him, for, following the fashion, being in evening clothes, he wore no watch; and he cursed deeply while the clerk grinned. Suddenly the glint of the security on his finger caught his eye, and Arthur's last words recurred to his mind. Almost humbly he faced his recent foe. "I say, couldn't you let me have a ticket—a third will do—on this ring? I believe it's valuable. I could pay you to-morrow. I must catch this train."

"Ow, that's your line now, is it? Thought you was going to call me something. This ain't a pawnshop and I can't advance you anything on your rolled gold and cut glass 'gipsey,' or is it a jujube set in it? We deal for cash only. I'm afraid you'll 'ave to foot it. Don't forget to take your boots off. Good night." With this parting shot the window was slammed.

Cyril ground his teeth. Wild thoughts surged through his brain, of returning in the future, extracting the clerk through his own window with a giant corkscrew, and then killing him. But he wasted no more time, and made a dash for the platform. As he ran he heard a whistle and the bang of a gate; and then the hoarse puffs of a departing engine echoed from the cavernous roof of the station. When he panted up to the barrier the ticket-snipper, one of the kindly apostles of the obvious, essayed consolation—"A 'arf minute and you'd 'a done it, guv'nor."

EXCEPT for a sweeper or two Cyril was now alone in the almost deserted terminus, and he felt that he was like the scraps of paper, cigarette ends, and banana skins around him—the refuse of a day's traffic. He stood gazing blankly at the glittering coin still in his hand. How the deuce he had got it, or who had given it to him, he could not tell, for he had been so royal that evening that he had not troubled to count his change, let alone examine the coins received. He hurled the token from him viciously, and for an instant he thought of tramping home. But it was only for an instant—the booking-clerk had hit upon his weak spot—his patent leather boots were new. Well—there it was—he must get a bed for the night, and, after all, there would not be much difficulty about that, since he was not an entire stranger to London.

The city with which Cyril was acquainted, however, was the London as it is when you have money in your pocket. The other London he did not yet know.

Leaving the station, he walked along until he came to a fair-sized hotel. The hall was lit up, and the place seemed respectable, and Cyril entered boldly. A uniformed attendant made obeisance in welcome.

"Where's the office?"

"Zis way, sare."

At the ring of a bell a sleek, princely gentleman in a frock-coat minced his way forward to a counter in a glass compartment, and bowed.

"I want a room, please."

"Certainly, sir; suite, double, or single?"

"Single."

"What price?"

"Oh—a—cheap room."

"Number two hundred and thirteen—seventh floor—five shillings?"

"Thanks, that'll do."

"Will you register?"

"Eh?"

"Will you please enter your name in this book?"

"Oh—all right." With some trepidation Cyril signed his name. The simple act somehow brought home to him the inconvenience of his situation, and he again cursed his own carelessness and the unknown donor of the farthing. The prince continued:—

"You will find the lift to the right. Hongri, take this gentleman's luggage, for two hundred and thirteen."

For a moment there was a deadlock. Henri did not move. The guest did not move. The sleek man did not move. He gazed from one to the other. So often did he do this before the silence was broken that his eyes wobbled like the front wheels of a traction engine.

"Oh—er—my luggage is not with me," stammered Cyril.

There was an indefinite but perceptible change in the atmosphere. Though everyone remained polite, the landscape somehow became less sunny.

"You wish it fetched—from the station?"

"Not exactly. To tell you the truth—I've missed the last train."

"Indeed, sir? I quite understand."

Everything in the garden again seemed lovely. Cyril smiled once more and turned to go towards the lift. After all it was quite simple. He would sell the ring in the morning and then settle.

"Of course, sir, you will not mind complying with our rules?" the suave voice followed him.

"Rather not. What rules?"

"As a matter of form, we require guests without luggage to settle for their rooms in advance." When Cyril showed some hesitation on hearing this, the drop in the temperature again became quite noticeable. He determined to take the man with the smooth voice into his confidence; he seemed quite a decent sort and would understand.

"Look here, old boy, to tell you the

"As a matter of form, we require guests without luggage to settle for their rooms in advance."

truth, I have no money on me." The mercury literally jerked down. "Er—as a matter of fact, I've been swindled. But I don't want you to trust me. Here's this ring. It's worth far more than my bill will come to. Take that as security for the night, and I'll settle up to-morrow."

Cyril slipped the ring off as he spoke and placed it on the counter.

"Very handsome ring, sir; valuable stone, no doubt; but the rules do not allow of our taking pledges. I am extremely sorry not to oblige. I suppose you have no—er—friends you could apply to?"

Cyril picked up the ring angrily. "Friends! Of course I have. But if I had friends I wanted to go to I shouldn't come here. Then you won't give me a room?"

"I'm afraid——"

"D'you think I want to get a room to steal from your other visitors? D'you think——"

The manager cut out the smile and shrugged his shoulders.

"Hongri, show the gentleman out. *Good* night, sir."

There was no object in making a scene, so the crestfallen Cyril departed.

Depressed, but not yet daunted, Cyril determined to seek a less pretentious hostelry where they knew a gentleman when they saw one, were not bound up in red tape, and would listen to reason. And this time, in order to avoid any unpleasant misunderstanding, he would lay all his cards, or rather his lack of them, on the table at once. He had not far to walk. Picking out a likely establishment, he rang the bell. As before, he was greeted by a foreigner. This time the janitor was clad in evening clothes and a tired shirt-front, and was half asleep. He carried a dead napkin.

"Blease?"

"I want a room."

"Blease." The man skated through an atmosphere of cauliflower to the back of the narrow hall and returned with a superior female of forbidding aspect, who was making entirely unsuccessful efforts to assume an expression of welcome.

"Good evening. You require a single room?"

"Yes."

"For how long?"

"For one night." Before the lady could say more he proceeded, hurriedly: "Of course, I have no luggage; and I don't happen to have any money *on* me. But——" He spoke as if he had a buggy-load of bullion round the corner.

"Ah! Has anyone recommended you to come to this establishment?"

"No. But——"

"I'm afraid we have no rooms vacant."

"——I have a cat's-eye ring!" To speak the truth, the Ollendorfian *non sequitur* of this statement did not escape the wretched Cyril; but he was going to get it out and face the music at once in a manly way.

"Noo—thenks—we're not requiring any this evening, thenks." She spoke as if he were hawking collar-studs or leather chrysanthemums.

"You see——"

"Fritz, show the gentleman——"

CYRIL had hardly yet reached the seamy side of the city's life; but he was precious near the unhemmed and raw edge; and in spite of nice manners and evening clothes it was plain that he was not going to raise anything "on his face." What he needed was money. Without it there was evidently going to be no bed for him. But how to get it? He might try to pop the ring, which was the only thing of value on him, but he was very doubtful if any pawnbrokers would be open. And, much as he disliked doing so, he made up his mind that the only way to settle the point was to ask a policeman. He walked on till he saw a guardian of the law, and then made the plunge, *finessing* with the obvious question.

"I say, constable—could you—er—tell me the right time?"

"Twelve forty-seven, sir."

"Thanks!" He turned to go. Then, quite as an after-thought, he added, "By the way officer, do you happen to know if any pawnbrokers are still open?"

Police-constable A537 looked his interlocutor up and down, and put his hand up to his face to stroke an imaginary beard; and his eyes twinkled.

"Let me see. There ain't many of 'em as'll be open as late as this. I think you'll find one in Keyhole Alley, on the right-'and as you go down from Drury Lane, number 97A, about 'arf way down—old Sammy Wot's-'is-name. 'E doesn't usually put his shutters up till pretty late."

"Thanks awfully."

When he eventually reached Drury Lane he still had to find his way to Keyhole Alley. There were few passers-by to ask, and he was not at first fortunate in the directions he received.

Finally he did find the alley, and arrived at number 97A—a small shop of the avuncular type. It was such a mean-looking place, with its blue, whistling, five-pronged gas-jet in the window, that he had qualms about entering, and began instinctively to button up his coat. When he did pluck up courage and step inside, a bell startled him with its chatter. The place seemed deserted. Sud-

denly, from behind a Field-Marshal's faded tunic, hanging from the ceiling, popped a man in shirt-sleeves. He had a shiny bald head, mutton-chop whiskers, and a nose like an alligator pear. As he stared at Cyril inquiringly over gold-rimmed pince-nez he looked like one of the " bad " men.

" I—er—want to pledge a ring."

The man held out his hand silently.

Cyril took off the ring and handed it over. The bad man weighed it, moved near to the gas, and, fixing a spy-glass between his left eyebrow and the pouchy wrinkle under his eye, examined it carefully. He then grunted, and put it back on the table. Cyril's confidence in the genuineness of his friend's jewellery was by now so shaken that he almost picked up the ring and departed. To his surprise he heard a hoarse whisper of " How much ? "

" I don't know. I leave it to you."

" Ve doan'd do business that way."

" Well—let me see." Cyril pitched his demand as low as possible to cover the cost of one night's lodging, his estimate of which had gone down during the last half-hour. " Say five shillings."

The very modesty of the demand had a curious effect. The nosey man leaned forward, looked his customer full in the face, spy-glass still in eye, and whispered in a tone which of itself suggested crime, " Your own property?"

The question flustered Cyril, and without considering the effect of such an answer he said " No."

When the spy-glass was suddenly dropped and a nasty smile crawled across the fat face in front of him he appreciated the construction that was being placed on his confession. He thought of " receivers " and " fences," and then, since the bobby had recommended the place, of police-traps. He stammered, " Not exactly—I mean——" Then unreasoning panic seized him. He grabbed the ring and bolted. After turning his fifth or sixth corner without meeting anyone he pulled up into a quick walk in order to avoid arousing suspicion. He had now quite lost his bearings. But he did not much care so long as he had shaken off that dreadful person in shirt-sleeves. To be quite frank, Cyril's nerve had been shaken.

BY now he was somewhere in one of the foreign quarters of London; and it was not a savoury neighbourhood. Here and there shops, chiefly for selling food, were open, and men were standing at the doors. As he passed under a lamp-post he read by its light a notice: " BEDS FOR SINGLE MEN." He stopped. The place where it was displayed seemed to be a compound of tobacconist, hairdresser, and hotel.

" Goot eve-ning, sare," said a voice not four feet away from him. A swarthy person, obviously a lover of garlic, also in shirt-sleeves, was standing in the recess of the doorway smoking a very long and thin cigar. Cyril started.

" You wanta a bed ? " continued the voice.

" Oh, good evenin'. Yes, I want a room."

" Sorree, sare, ze rooms all fool; bot you can 'ave a bed in ze shop. Vair clean, vair goot bed. Shop privat, to youraself, no one else sleep there. Bed, two shilling. Bed, breakfast, t'ree shilling. Ollright ? "

Cyril shuddered at the idea of breakfast. " No—I sha'n't need any food. I only want a bed."

The man beamed.

" I have no money on me; I will pay to-morrow."

The automatic cut-out again came into play, and the beaming ceased.

" Noh, noh ! You pay firs, zis 'otel."

" Hold on. See thisa ring ? I leave it with you till to-morrow. Gooda ring. Then I comea back, I pay."

Cyril was trying to speak clearly and distinctly, and somehow found himself talking staccato in English more broken than the foreigner's.

The swarthy person was broad-minded, untrammelled by red tape, and eminently open to reason.

" Let me see ring." He examined it, tasted it, then said in a tone of overdone disgust: " No good."

Cyril's jaw dropped; after the pawnbroker's opinion he was unprepared for this. He did not notice the beady, greedy eyes watching him so keenly.

" I tella you. Ring good—you 'ave bed for t'ree shilling. Ring no good—you 'ave bed for sick shilling. Ollright, eh ? " Even the philanthropy of this did not arouse Cyril's suspicions.

" You'll let me the bed. You keep my ring. I pay you six shillings to-morrow. You give me back the ring. That it ? "

" *Si, si*—yees, sare," replied the fellow, eagerly.

" All right."

" Ollright. Come in, sare." The man pocketed the ring and led the way into a largish shop. " You seet down one meenit. I maka your bed."

Cyril looked round him, and began to unbutton his boots while the man proceeded to drag in a chair-bed from the back room. The shop appeared to be a hairdresser's saloon, and most of the furniture and fittings were shrouded in ghostly sheets. It was fairly clean, but it smelled of hair-oil, cigarettes, and garlic. Moreover, even to the unimaginative Cyril, the moral atmosphere suggested anarchy, murder, blackmail. Though he did not feel at ease, he was

quite close to the street, which, after all, was better than being in an attic several storeys up, cut off from the world. And, anyway, the beetle-browed bandit making the bed knew that the ring was his guest's only valuable, and he had got that already. As Cyril kicked off his boots he gave a sigh of relief, for his feet ached.

In a few minutes the proprietor said: "Ollright, goodanight, sare," and departed behind the shop. Cyril locked the door to the back room, unbolted the front door, took off his coat, but no more—in case he should have to get up in a hurry—turned down the gas, and tumbled into bed.

TIRED as he was, he could not sleep, and for some time tossed to and fro. Though, when he had parted from Arthur not much more than one hour previously, no one could have said, in the language of the day, that either youth was "foxed," the room was now whirling round Cyril, and the events of the evening kept recurring to his over-weary brain. He finally dropped off into a doze, to dream that he was being murdered with razors by three men all exactly like the proprietor of the establishment. He woke with a start, so much impressed by the possibilities revealed that he got up, tested the front door to see that it would open quickly, and left it ajar. He said to himself that it was in order to obtain a little fresh air, but it was really to facilitate retreat. He also put on his coat and boots, the latter unbuttoned, and then got back into bed. For some time he turned and twisted, and again fell asleep with his face to the wall.

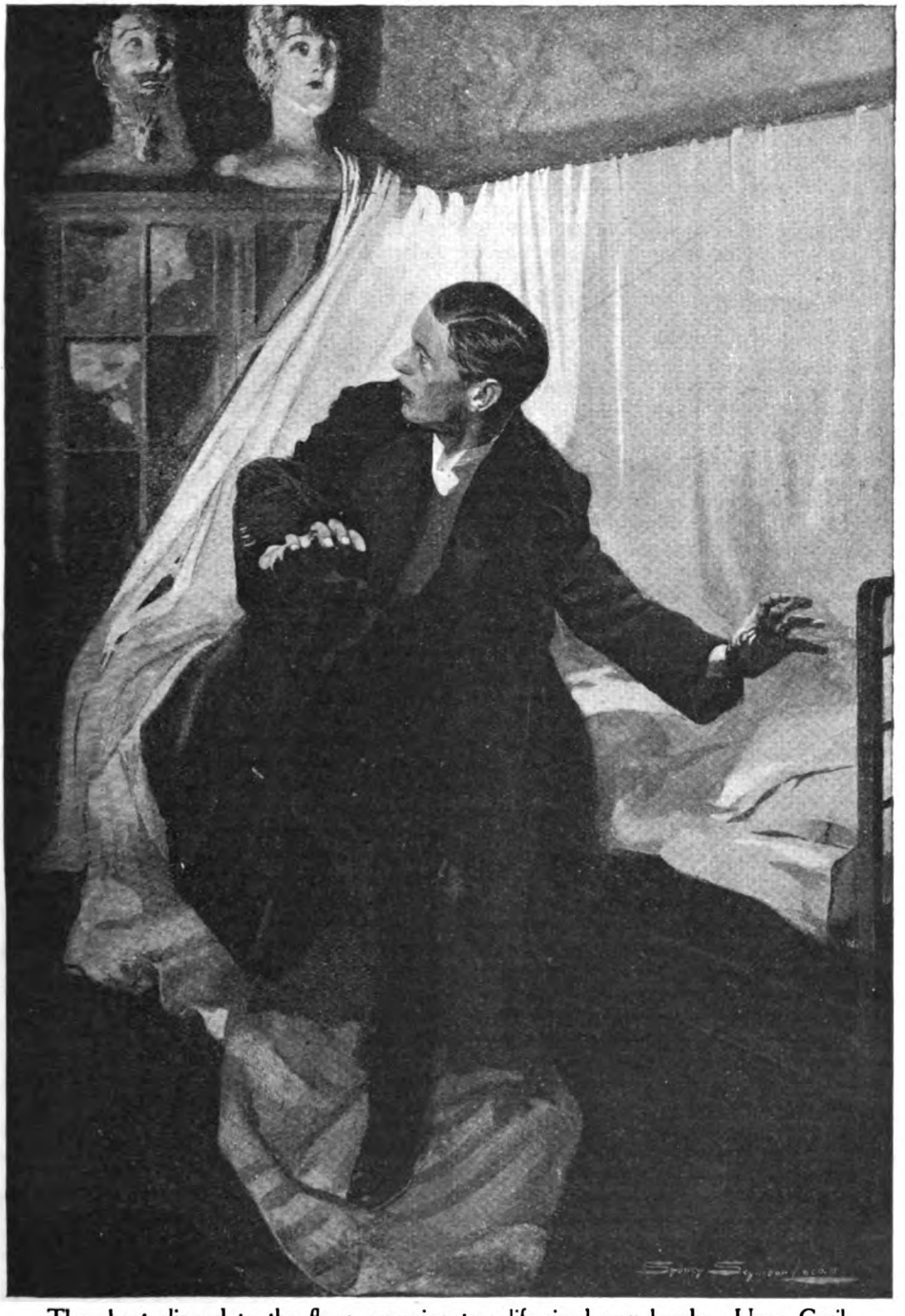
Now, close by the foot of the bed was a piece of furniture covered up, like all the rest, in a sheet. As Cyril tossed about, the corner of this sheet had become entangled with the bedclothes, and when he turned to the wall with one big heave, the sheet slipped to the floor, exposing a show-case upon which were two life-sized wax heads. One was that of a simpering lady in a Court coiffure. The other was that of a ferocious man with a forked beard, one half of which was grey, showing Nature unaided, and the other half auburn, presumably illustrative of the effect of hair dye. In the half light of the street lamp outside the appearance of these two masks staring glassily above the show-case as if their owners were about to climb over would have been alarming. As matters were, their effect was greatly intensified. Two transparencies hung on the shop window, one green, advertising a hair-restorer, and the other crimson, proclaiming the merits of a safety-razor. And by chance the heads were so placed that the rays of the street lamp passed on to them through these advertisements. The result was that the face of the lady shone out an unwholesome corpse colour, while that of the bearded man appeared to be bathed in blood.

To have been faced by these ghastly objects even on a bright and sunny morning, after a good night's rest, a cold tub, and a hearty breakfast, would have shocked a moderately strong and healthy butcher. Upon the now over-wrought and suspicious Cyril, when he turned round after a short doze and opened his eyes, the effect was electrical. With a smothered yell he was off the bed, across the room, and out of the house, again doing his best sprint down the street. He ran blindly, taking every turning to which he came. First one unbuttoned boot flew from his foot into the gutter; then its companion followed. But he took no heed. All he cared for was to keep in the middle of the road.

By this time our friend, Constable A537, still stolidly patrolling the streets, was becoming bored, for it was nearly time for his relief. He had just emitted a deep yawn when, without warning sound, a figure in evening clothes blew like a leaf round the corner not fifty yards away and approached swiftly and silently. The policeman was in shadow, and the midnight fugitive had not yet seen him. He was evidently a criminal flying from justice—else why was he bootless?—and A537 prepared for action. He crouched in the shadow with arms outspread, and as the runner, quite unseeing, came abreast, he heaved himself into the roadway straight in the latter's path, shouted "'Alt!" and grabbed.

Cyril, who had been a "spot" three-quarter in his school Rugger team, was, from habit, running with his hands out in front of him, as if he held a football. He observed his peril just in time, and gave one of his celebrated swerves. The bobby clasped the air, and sat down heavily in the mud. As the criminal hurtled past in full stride, the policeman heard his breath coming in great sobs, and, to his amazement, recognized the now pale face of the searcher for pawnbrokers of an hour or so earlier.

Habit, they tell us, is second nature. At any rate, it is a very curious thing, and sometimes cuts both ways, like an old table-knife. So far it had helped Cyril; but if it had not been for habit, he could have got clean away, and so avoided much subsequent trouble and unpleasant publicity. As it was, when his opponent went down he could not resist looking round to see if he was being "backed up." It was absurd. It was also senseless, in the circumstances. But it must be remembered that the young fellow was not quite himself. The result was that he noticed that the gigantic footpad



The sheet slipped to the floor, exposing two life-sized wax heads. Upon Cyril the effect was electrical. With a smothered yell he was off the bed, across the room, and out of the house.

he had just dodged was a policeman—a deliverer! He stopped almost in his stride, turned, and ran towards him. A537, who had picked himself up surprisingly quickly for a man of his build, at once jumped to the conclusion that the criminal was returning to "do him in," probably with a knife. With the well-known pluck of the Force, he did not hesitate, but charged at once with heavy rolled cape upraised.

Cyril, panic-struck that his only friend showed signs of escaping, quite lost his head, and collared him low. It was a beautiful clean tackle round the knees, and the locked pair fell to earth, the rolled cape striking Cyril a terrific blow, but not on the head. Nor did the shock of the fall loosen their grasp. Though the fugitive had taken the road with his nose he was comparatively happy, and hung on, determined not to lose his saviour. And after two heavy falls the saviour's grip was equally determined. Meanwhile the sound of his whistle was splitting the night intermittently in gasps.

As if by magic first one, then two more policemen appeared from nowhere and loped up in a squishy rubber-soled trot. Various windows were opened.

Now more or less disentangled, Cyril was lying on his face, at intervals trying to explain that there had been murder—a double murder. His enunciation was not clear, for he was still breathless, a hot heavy hand was gripping his collar, and blood was also streaming from his nose. Now, the silly thing about blood is that you never can tell whose it is. Of course, A537 assumed the worst.

"That's yer game—is it—you—garrotter! Murder?" he panted.

"Wot's up?" ejaculated the reinforcements as soon as they were within earshot.

"Something crool! 'E's murdered a pawnbroker in Keyhole Alley—old Uncle Sam!"

At this, weak as he felt, Cyril attempted a protest. It was at once cut short. "Stow that! Anythink you say will be taken down and used in evidence against you. Come hup!"

Sorrowfully the little procession moved on towards Bow Street.

A FEW days later, when in self-defence compelled to narrate his adventures of the evening, so far as he remembered them, to his friend, the chastened Cyril was somewhat vexed by the other's entire lack of sympathy and excessive amusement. When Arthur had recovered sufficiently from laughter to speak, he said:—

"Top-hole, old boy! *I* had a good enough evenin', but not a patch on yours. What a royal time you must have had playing footer with the bobbie! And what makes the whole thing more amusin' is that my return ticket and me oof were on me all the time."

The reply to this was a gurgle impossible of translation into words.

"Yes," Arthur gushed on, "found 'em next mornin'. Fact is I was wearin' a new suit, and my ass of a tailor had insisted on putting in what he called an American pocket. I'd stuffed all my loose cash and my ticket into the blessed pocket and then forgot all about it. Here's what I owe you—seven and fivepence, as far as I made out."

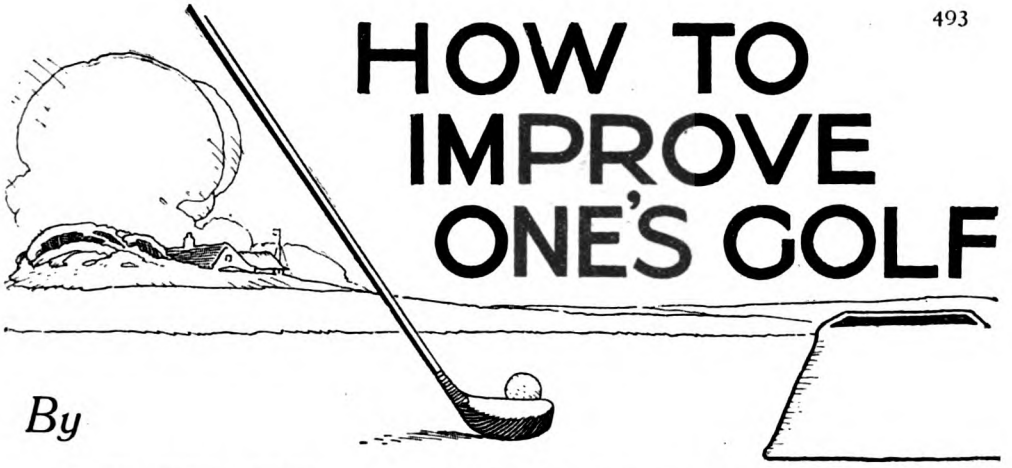
Cyril's utterance had now reached the stage of words. But they cannot be reproduced.

"Now you may as well hand over my ring," chirped Arthur.

At this Cyril became coherent. "My good ass, haven't I told you that I deposited your silly snide ring with the ice-cream cut-throat in that garrotter's den?"

"*Snide* ring? You juggins, it's very valuable! Haven't I told you that it once belonged to the Empress of China, or Lucrezia Borgia, or someone? You don't mean to say you haven't got it back?" The speaker's grin faded away as he obtained his answer from his friend's expression. "You *are* a rotter! Where does the brute hang out? I'll get it myself."

"Right!" was the reply, and the smile which began for the first time to wreathe Cyril's face was somewhat bitter. "I *am* a rotter; and half the detective force of London must be rotters, too, for they haven't found me friend or his murder-shop. But there's nothing like doin' a thing yourself. *You* have a try. Tee up outside old What's-his-name's pop-shop in Keyhole Alley, in evenin' clothes and new patents; kick off at one G.M.; run like blazes in the direction you first think of for five minutes; then stop by a lamp-post—and you can't miss the place. It's as easy as hitting the water when you dive out of a boat! Old boy, I wish you luck!"



HOW TO IMPROVE ONE'S GOLF

By

CYRIL J. H. TOLLEY

ILLUSTRATED BY W. F. THOMAS.

PART II.

CURE FOR SLICING.

THIS fault, which has an appalling tendency to occur whenever there is an out of bounds on the right, may usually be traced to the swing and the distribution of the weight at the moment of impact. A sliced drive generally reaps the full benefit of the error, for, apart from being considerably off the line, it seldom goes very far. Even supposing it falls on level ground it will not run any distance, ten yards' run being about the maximum. The beginner's chief fault is that, as he hits at the ball, all his weight is thrown on his right leg and he appears to adopt a sitting position, with the heel of his left foot off the ground and the toe of that foot pointing towards the hole. In making this stroke he instinctively pulls his arms into his side and this accentuates the slice.

The cure for these two faults is to keep the weight almost equally distributed on both feet, with, if possible, a little more weight on the left foot, at the same time remembering to keep the right arm straight when hitting the ball and keeping it so when following through in the direction of the hole. It is essential that the right arm should be straight as far as the horizontal. If, in taking the club back, the player transfers his weight too much on to his right foot, as he comes forward he brings his weight on to his left foot—this will produce a sway, which will also cause him to slice. That is a fault he must guard against. Letting his left side give at the moment of hitting makes the ball fly away to the right, and an easy way for him to remedy that is to remember to turn his left toe in, so that it is at least at a right angle to the proposed line of flight of the ball. If he then keeps his left foot firm on the ground, it aids considerably in keeping the left side rigid. A too-open stance—that is, the left foot placed in the rear of the right, thus giving a two-eyed stance—will invariably cause a slice. Therefore bring the left foot well up towards the ball. Always, when I wish to make a compulsory slice

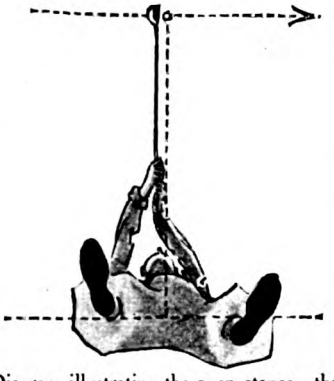
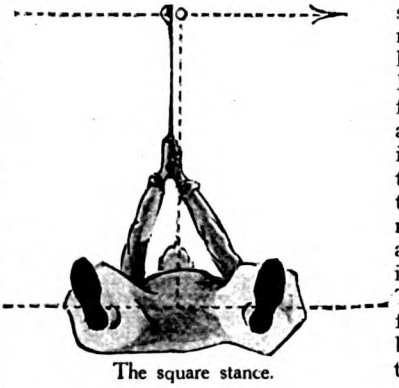
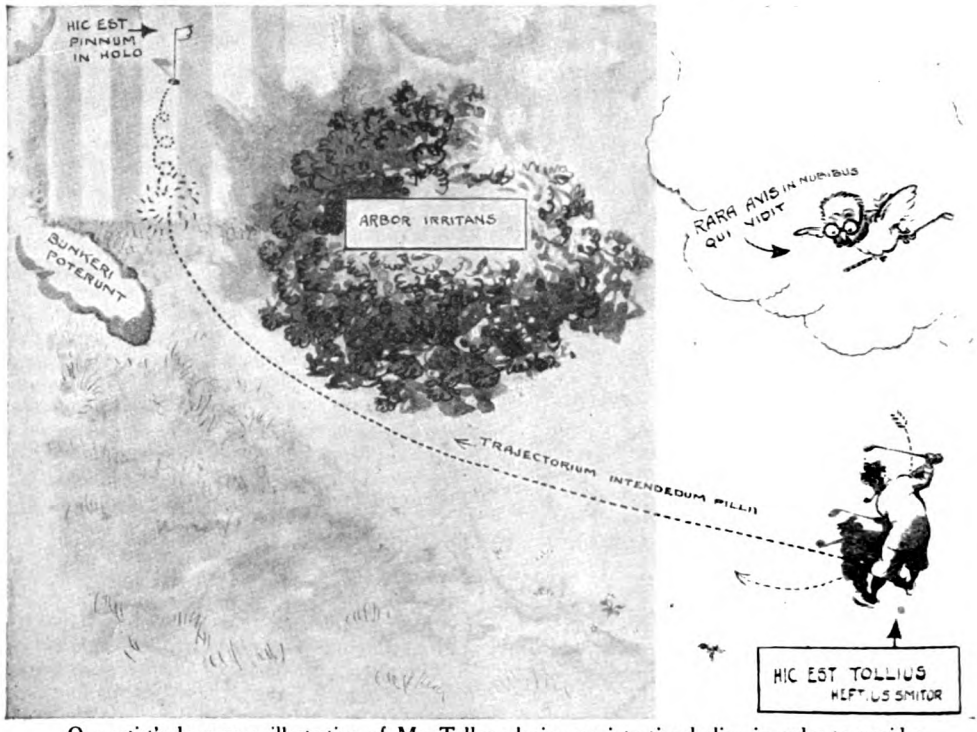


Diagram illustrating the open stance—that is, with the right foot in advance of the left.



The square stance.



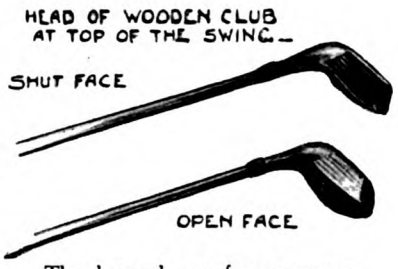
Our artist's humorous illustration of Mr. Tolley playing an intentional slice in order to avoid a tree in the line to the green.

round some inconsiderate tree that blocks out the direct line to the green, I adopt a more open stance. Then, in making my back swing, I take the club rather out from my body, and in hitting the ball play across my body, taking care not to turn over the right hand in doing so, but rather keeping the face of the club open.

Too rigid a grip with the left hand will cause the ball to fly to the right, and to cure that do not increase the tension of the right, but rather try to slacken slightly the grip of the left hand. If both hands are gripping the club too tightly, the player will find that he is unable to swing freely and will lose distance in consequence. Another and final cause of slicing is caused by getting the left hand too far under the shaft of the club. Try to get your left thumb just on the right side of the shaft, so that the V formed by the thumb and first finger is in the same alignment as that made by the right hand.

CURE FOR CUTTING.

This fault also causes the ball to fly to the right and is the result in practically every case of the player taking his club back incorrectly. Instead of taking the club head back smoothly, close to the ground, it is lifted much too abruptly. The right hand causes this, for it takes control in the back swing, which is wrong. In so doing it causes the right elbow to leave the side of the body and thereby destroys any smoothness in the swing. In bringing the club head down towards the ball the path of the club is too steep—in fact, the movement is comparable to a man driving pegs into the ground. Consequently the club head does not approach the ball on the same plane as the ground, as it should, but rather from above it, and in striking the ball it is impossible to dislodge it without the club head hitting the ground after the ball has been hit. It thus gives the ball a kind of jab, and as the club head has entered the ground the player is prevented from following through, and considerable loss of distance is the result. The cure, therefore, is to remember to take the

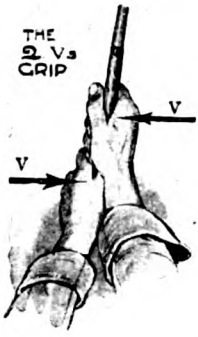


The shut and open face as seen at the top of the swing.

club back with the left hand, keeping the club head close to the ground for at least eighteen inches; also bearing in mind to keep the left arm straight—but not too rigid—and to keep the right elbow close to the side of the body.

CURE FOR HOOKING.

Of the several kinds of hook, the quick hook is the most disastrous. Not only does the ball fly such a short distance, but it has an unconscionable habit of burying itself in the thickest of undergrowth. The hook imparts to the ball a top right-over-left spin, which causes the ball to run a considerable distance, and if, when going fairly fast, it encounters any sort of obstruction in the nature of a bush, the ball gaily embeds itself in its embrace. The cause of this error is most frequently traceable to the player's incorrect grip. It may be caused by turning the left hand too far over, so that the player can see more than two knuckles of his left hand when he puts the club behind the ball, or it may be that he has his right hand too far under the shaft. Either of these positions will prevent the club being taken back in the correct way, and will tend to make the player adopt the closed face style. At the moment of striking the ball the nose of the club will be turned in and it will be physically impossible to hit the ball other than to the left. You must therefore be careful to adopt the double V grip, as previously described in the latter part of "Slicing." Taking the club back in too flat a swing, which incidentally makes you pivot too far, will cause you to hook, but not so violently as the quick hook, and the ball will probably fly a considerable distance down the course before it suddenly swings into the rough on the left.



It is sometimes necessary to play a hooked drive, either to make full use of a cross wind or to negotiate some obstacle. To achieve this result I get a little farther in front of the ball and drop back my right foot, so that an imaginary line drawn from the point of my right shoulder through the left shoulder would pass considerably to the right of the place to which I hope to hit the ball. Some people advocate changing the grip and not the stance, but I think that is more dangerous, so I always leave the grip severely alone. It is necessary to impart a slight right-over-left spin to the ball, so I try to take the club back fairly flat and to pivot farther than usual; that is, my left shoulder passes the line drawn from the ball to the eyes when the club is horizontal. In this way a sweep is assured. I then try to hit round the far side of the ball by turning the face of the club over the veriest fraction after impact. Swinging through rather flat accentuates the hook. Remember, if ever you attempt to play this controlled hook, it is of the greatest

A PEEP INTO THE FUTURE.

"As we grow old we all instinctively hit hard, to keep up our reputations."

importance to glue your eye to the ball. There is one very great danger in playing this hook—the face of the club may be turned over too quickly. In fact, it frequently meets the ball already turned. This will result in a stroke which looks like, and feels like, a top, but is only a smother, which can be proved by looking at the ball. There will be no mark, except perhaps a slight graze—certainly no " gash " as one expects to find after a top.

This intentional hooking is comparatively easy to get a favourable result from off a tee with the ball well raised from the ground, but it is very difficult indeed to accomplish when the ball is lying close on a fairway. The ground must be hit to pick the ball up, and if in the least overdone this will cause the shot to be cut. Therefore, I would suggest that a shorter swing be used, not so much power applied, and the face kept rather turned in the whole time and prevented from turning over far when the club head meets the ground after the ball has been struck.

It is necessary to aim considerably to the right of the place you wish the ball to reach, and you must sum up sufficient confidence to play the shot boldly, for the least suspicion in your mind that you may fail will ruin your pleasure for that hole, to say the least.

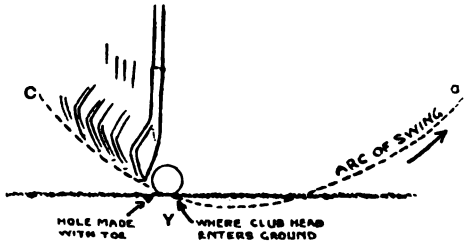
GETTING NO LENGTH FROM THE TEE.

The fact that you are not getting the length you expect is due invariably to lack of timing. You seem to hit the ball cleanly, you strain muscles and back as of yore, but the ball won't respond. As we grow old we all instinctively hit hard, to keep up our reputations. What is the result ? We lose our swing and our style is short and snappy. This is caused mainly by gripping the club too tightly and bracing all our muscles and sinews to take the force of the blow. Therefore examine your swing and see if this is what is happening, and, if so, buy a new driver with a whippy shaft and rather heavy head, and go back to your old free and supple slow swing, taking care not to hurry anything. Remember that the back swing should be controlled solely by the left hand and a straight—not rigid—left arm. Start the downward swing of the club slowly and, gradually increasing its speed as it nears the ground, hit firmly *through* the ball and concentrate on having your arms straight at the bottom of the swing. Be sure, also, of having the right arm straight in the follow through, as was the left in the back swing.

In concluding these wooden club tips, let me repeat that the main thing to remember is to hit—or, rather, swing—*through* the ball, which is totally different to the attitude you adopt for iron clubs.

THE METHOD OF PLAYING IRON SHOTS.

When you are faced with an iron shot up to a green, remember that the style you must adopt is different to your style with wooden clubs. Briefly, your back swing must be more upright and shorter, you hit down on to the ball and graze the turf on the far side of the ball after you have hit it, and your follow through is not so long. Also, your weight at the finish of the stroke is, if anything, more on the left foot than after a drive. By far the most important point is to remember to hit down at the ball and graze the turf after the ball has been struck. If playing an iron shot from a tee this tip is worth remembering. Dig your toe into the ground, making thereby a small hole, and then place the ball so that the hole made is immediately behind it, thus:



Now you have to remember that any divot you take must be after the ball has been hit, and therefore your divot must be on the left side of the hole you made with your toe. After the ball has been hit the tee will look like this :

Thus you can see that you have hit the ball a downward blow and that the lowest point of the arc of the swing is not reached until the ground is hit. By this method you have imparted to the ball a back spin which, although it tends to check the ball when it pitches, is really done in order to keep the ball steady in its flight and also give it a boring capacity into the wind.

It will be seen that the ball has been hit just below the centre, and the club head has entered the ground at Y and taken a divot, and it will be observed that a back spin must have been imparted to the ball. That is the main principle in iron play, and if you can remember to do this practically all your iron faults will disappear. It will be understood from the diagram that the steeper the line C D the nearer underneath the ball will the ground be hit (Y), and consequently the more the ball will be nipped and the higher its elevation. The flatter the line C D the farther from the ball will be the point Y, and consequently the ball will remain longer on the face of the club, and

the flatter will be the trajectory of the ball. Do not be frightened to take a divot. Some people rather advocate playing the ball as cleanly as possible, but this is wrong. When the stroke is played properly the divot is taken out very cleanly and can be replaced whole and will not damage the fairway to any considerable extent. Try to hit the ball with as much of the back of the left hand as possible, but also do not neglect to use the right hand. Too much left hand will cause the ball to be hooked; with too much right hand the shot is generally cut. Finally, always turn out the face of the iron slightly when you address the ball. It will give you increased length and, incidentally, accuracy, and it will make certain that your wrists function and thus give you more power.

CURE FOR SHANKING.

If you bear in mind this essential of hitting through the ball, you can come to very little harm. There is, however, one fault which is frequently occurring, and that is shanking. It may be due to a variety of reasons, and the best thing to do if it happens to you in a competition is not to worry very much about it. Do not try to find out the reason, but adopt this course: instead of addressing the ball off the centre of the club, when you play your next iron shot, address the ball off the extreme end of the club—that is, the toe. You will find that that shot is hit off the centre of the club, and this will give you confidence to finish your round in comfort. Then, and only then, should you seriously try to find out the cause of the disaster. Generally it is traceable to the fact that at the moment of hitting the ball your left heel is not on the ground, but suspended in mid air, and that causes your weight to be thrown too much towards the ball, and gives you the feeling of falling on to the ball. If you find it difficult to keep your left heel on the ground, it may help you if you remember to brace your left knee when you are bringing the club to the ball.

I have heard of a cure for socketting which I do not think is very practical, and that is to place a handkerchief under your right armpit, and keep it there all through the stroke. This fault is due to the fact that you are throwing your arms too much in the direction of mid-off as you hit the ball, probably due to taking the club too far out from your body in the back swing, thus causing your right elbow to leave your side. Another cause of socketting is hitting the ball with a bent left arm. This is undoubtedly caused either by standing too near the ball or standing too far away, as at the last moment, in attempting to reach the ball, you overbalance slightly and all your weight is transferred to your toes.

"I believe it was J. H. Taylor—he will pardon me if I am wrong!"

FAULTS IN APPROACHING.

Fluffing approaches, hitting the ground behind the ball, and topping are solely due to the fact that you are not watching the ball intently enough. You must fix your eye on one particular recess at the back of the ball, and keep your head in that position even after you have hit the ball. I believe it was J. H. Taylor—he will pardon me if I am wrong!—who always put his foot on the place where the ball rested before he looked up to see where it had gone. This aided him in keeping his head down. Be careful if you try this tip of his, for an over-anxious player might possibly put his foot on the ball before he hit it, and kicking the ball in play is only permissible when you are in the rough and your opponent is not in a position to see you! The following story—those who know it, please think it new!—concerns two old Scottish professors who were playing over a famous course. A. had pulled into the rough and by the aid, so rumour had it, of a convenient hole in his pocket had managed to find his ball, but B., on the far side of the course, was lost to view in an immense bunker. One of the gallery then said that B. had been a long while in the bunker, but the professional who happened to overhear him turned to him and said: "Don't you fash yoursel',

Sometimes it is advisable to study the ground around the hole.

mon; B.'s no been wastin' his time." By which it can be gathered that they knew one another's little idiosyncrasies.

HINTS ON PUTTING.

In putting, the chief fault with all players is their repeated failure to hit the ball up to the hole. A putt that is short is really a non-counter. It has never stood any chance of going into the hole and is, therefore, a wasted stroke. Every putt that goes too far has the merit that it might conceivably have hit the back of the hole and dropped in; and, again, it generally helps you to hole the putt back if there are any irregularities on the green, as you have seen the ball's line. This fault of being short is generally due to the fact that most golfers concern themselves solely with the task of getting the line, and pay but scant regard to the distance of the putt. Give your whole attention to the study of strength in putting and you will find that, besides never taking three putts, a great number of long putts will not only go near to the hole, but some will fall in. Having become a bold putter—that is, one whose ball is always past the hole by about two feet—you can then concentrate on getting the line. Try and find at least two places, one near the ball and one near the hole, over which the ball must pass to enter the hole. Be convinced in your mind that you have the right line and hit the ball firmly. All short putts should be hit boldly at the back of the hole—any half-hearted attempts will invariably bring disaster.

Sometimes with long putts, or even run-ups, it is advisable to study the ground around the hole, with a view to making your next stroke as easy as possible. If the hole is on a slope, always try to leave yourself an uphill putt, for this can be struck boldly; whereas it is frequently the case that a downhill putt cannot be struck boldly, but has to be trickled. Personally, I prefer to putt on really fast greens, when all you have to do is to set the ball in motion and it will run gaily on its way. On a slow green, when you have to hit the ball in order to give it strength and also direction, it is far harder to control. Concentrate on hitting the ball off one distinct place of the club—toe, heel, or centre, whichever you fancy—and this will ensure a smooth and accurate stroke. Nothing is more fatal than addressing the ball off the toe and hitting it with the heel, or *vice versâ;* it means that you have a loop in your back swing, and that, above all, is the *bête noire* of all golfers.

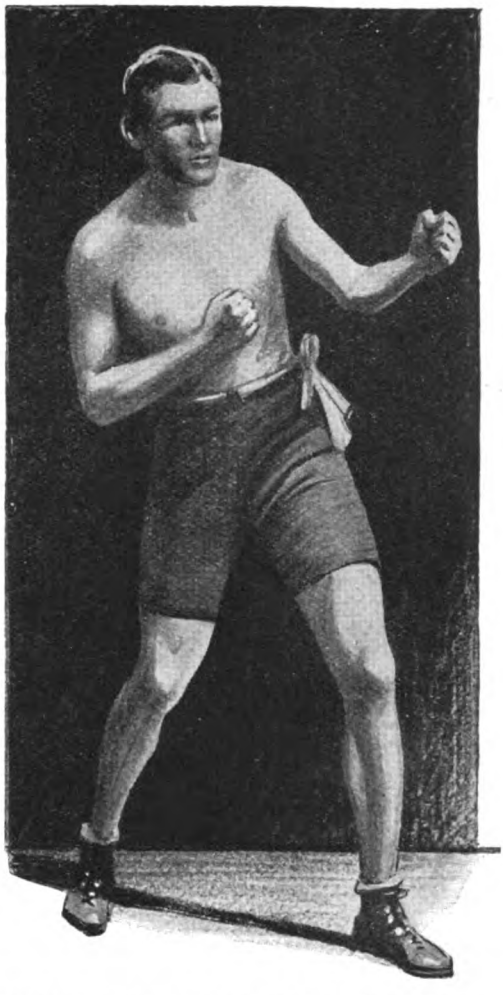
I will not detain you further in your impatience to dash out on to the lawn to try these tips. I give you this last warning—see that your driving net is particularly strong, as with your increased power resulting from the correct application of your strength you may find not only an ultimatum from the gardener but a heavy bill from the window-mender.

THE SHADWELL KID

by

HOLWORTHY HALL

ILLUSTRATED BY CHAS. CROMBIE



ARTHUR CARROLL was just fifteen when he discovered the immortal truth that money makes money. Also that, in spite of all one may say to the contrary, a great many of the pleasant things in life are automatically barred from the mortal who hasn't got the price of admission, so to speak. And in the space of sixty minutes he thought it all out and resolved upon a career of success.

Now, he had a long way to go—a very long way. For poverty was a most familiar thing in the home of the Carrolls.

Arthur's father was a man of dogged respectability: a clerk who wore white washable ties, and never missed a prayer-meeting. He had never understood his wife, which was probably why he never understood that his son could be anything but a replica of himself. When Arthur told him of his plans he threw cold water on them by the bucketful.

"Now, don't you be a fool, Artie," he said. "Get all them notions right straight out of your noddle. You study double-entry, and when you get grown-up you'll thank me for it. A good, *steady* job's the thing, even if you don't get much in the way of wages."

"I was goin' to save up money myself," said Artie, sulkily. "Save it up and go into business."

At this Mr. Carroll became peremptory. If Artie ever earned any money, he wasn't to hoard it for a vain and vicious dream: but until he was twenty-one he was to deposit it with father, who would apply it to some useful and godly purpose. Such as getting new oilcloth or contributing to the Fiji missions, whereby the lowly cannibal might be weaned from his present menu, or, at least, be taught the civilized custom of using a knife and fork.

So that Artie, with jaundice in his soul, flung himself out of the house; and while walking dreamily along was elbowed off the footpath by a butcher's boy some half a head taller and many pounds heavier—and the only witness of succeeding events was a gentleman named Lanigan, interested in the prize-fighting industry.

After it was all over Lanigan persuaded the butcher's boy that he wasn't killed, advised him where and how to apply raw beefsteak to his face, and turned to the winner.

"Kid," he inquired, with native loving-kindness, "who ever learnt you to scrap?"

"Who what?" snapped Artie, and was for moving on, when Lanigan caught his arm.

After it was all over Lanigan turned to the learnt you

" I'm givin' you the tip, kid. Want to make a bit o' money ? "

Artie halted as with an emergency brake. " Yes—how ? "

" Oh, nothin'—only I know another kid about your size what thinks he's a scrapper. Well, he needs to be took down, see ? I watched you fight, so I got the idea *you* could lick him—and there's a couple o' quid for you if you do. See ? "

Artie stiffened. " What ? "

" Two quid was what I said." And Lanigan's voice was the voice of Melody descending from a throne.

Artie Carroll could hardly clear the mist from his senses. Two pounds ! It wasn't merely a sum, it was an endowment. It was a miracle from the skies. The cornerstone of his castle in Spain had come tumbling upon him, out of the blue, as unexpectedly and as unceremoniously as a brick from the scaffold of a careless bricklayer. And how could his father ever suspect the source thereof and claim the booty ? And Artie was already a budding artist with his fists down Shadwell way.

" Is that straight, mister ? " he managed.

" 'Course it is."

Artie's eyes were bulging. " No, but—this kid isn't too big for me ? "

" He's your size." Lanigan showed impatience. " Now, listen, kid. Me and some more sports like me wants to see this young feller licked, see ? If you can do it you get the two quid. See ? "

" Where is he ? " demanded Artie, impetuously.

When he actually met that other kid, however—but this wasn't until Saturday night, and after much diplomacy on Lanigan's part — Artie was frightened. He wasn't afraid of bruises, but he was utterly demoralized by his own presence in a sink of iniquity. Artie knew it was a sink of

winner. "Kid," he inquired, "who ever to scrap?"

iniquity partly by the reputation the place had and partly by the smell. He was sitting under strong lights, clothed in next to nothing, and there was nowhere to hide. He was hypnotized by the rows of disembodied faces which peered up at him through a curtain of bad air and cigar smoke. His heart sounded to him like a defective motor-car engine. If his father ever knew! His mother! His sister! His teachers!

And then, of course, there was that other kid about Artie's size, Alec Greenburg, in the opposite corner, and the other kid didn't look as though he or his father, or, for that matter, anybody of his immediate acquaintance, had ever attended many prayer-meetings. On the contrary, he was a type that would assuredly have interested Darwin. And he was so cool, so evidently experienced, as he leaned back against the ropes and grinned at a friend in the audience. Lanigan had said, again and again, that Alec was nothing but a wash-out, but to Artie he began to look extremely formidable.

Clang! And if Artie's knees, just then, could have been coupled to a dynamo, he would have generated almost enough current to light a goodly section of Shadwell.

They had told him to shake hands with Alec first, and he meant to do it, but as he extended his hand Alec slapped it, and simultaneously banged in his left to the jaw. Artie staggered back, pained and disillusioned, but from that instant everything except the treachery of that other kid melted out of his consciousness. He forgot the crowd, he forgot his father, he forgot himself. He forgot even the two pounds. He meant to get even with Alec.

His left hand went up before him mechanically, and rocked back and forth as if pushing the air away by gentle degrees. His right stayed low and menacing. Alec, less devout-looking than ever, came in with a rush; Artie stopped him with a straight left, and ducked. Alec led cautiously, and Artie slipped under his guard and landed heavily to the body. The other kid snarled,

and while he was still snarling Artie feinted with his left, set himself, and hit out. . . . And the other kid was lying on his back, as flat and helpless as any turtle, and people were applauding and laughing immoderately. The first event of the evening's entertainment had lasted thirty seconds.

It was Lanigan who helped Artie Carroll, half-dazed and all trembling with nervous excitement, into the mouldy dressing-room. "Fine!" said Lanigan. "Didn't I *tell* you? Quickest knock-out I ever clapped eyes on. Now you come again, next Saturday night, at nine o'clock. You'll scrap something a bit better, but you'll be all right. Stick to the game, kid. You're a born scrapper, and you'll make a pile o' money."

To be sure, if fish is a brain food, Lanigan's diet should have included two large whales a day, merely as an appetizer; but Artie thought he was wonderful. The boy went home without a scratch, and stayed awake until dawn rolling Lanigan's prophecy under his tongue, and seeing how to put flesh on the skeleton of his visionings. What under the sun could be simpler than to hammer and be hammered for a few minutes now and then, and save up the proceeds? Why, at school one scrapped for nothing. It would be necessary, of course, to keep it dark from father, or the Fijians would get the money.

And so, for the next two years, a wide-shouldered, slim-waisted youngster, whose family would have put prize-fighting on a slightly lower plane than safe-breaking, went into action once or twice a month. And if, occasionally, he escorted home a black eye or a split lip, it cost him only a groan from his father and the gloomy forecast that any lad who would parade the streets at night and engage in broils, when he might have remained in the house and read such books as were prescribed, would eventually reap the bitter fruit thereof. Or words to that effect.

In the beginning he got two pounds if he won a fight, and not even bus fare home if he lost, but since he generally contrived to win, or at the worst draw, the market presently strengthened to three, to four, to five pounds, and on one notable occasion, when he stayed eight rounds with a genuine third-rater, it sky-rocketed to eight. By the time he was seventeen he had crammed the rudiments of a good workaday education into his own head—this he knew was vital—and he was so sick of punching and being punched that the sound of any gong produced goose-flesh on him; but he had saved nearly a hundred and fifty pounds and deposited it in a bank. There remained only the ordeal of breaking the news to his father.

He hadn't yet summoned his nerve, when suddenly his father fell ill and died—died innocent and a bankrupt. There was only one thing for Artie to do, and he did it. With a confession he turned his little fortune over to his mother and sister—who were shocked and revolted, but later agreed that the taint probably wasn't contagious—and went on fighting and cramming his head with learning.

When he began to earn recognition, and the secret leaked out in the boxing world that he was a studious-minded youth, the newspapers took him up, and gave him more space in six months than Noah has had (at least in the newspapers) since the Flood. And, naturally enough, the cartoonists fell upon him, and drew him with a protuberant forehead and huge spectacles, sitting between rounds on a set of Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" and reading Ibsen, while his seconds fanned him with large parchments labelled respectively Plato and Emerson.

By that time one of your pure and high-minded aristocrats should have tripped blithely into the foreground, recognized true merit where he saw it, taken Carroll under his wing, and hatched him. Unfortunately, however, nothing of the kind happened. Meanwhile Artie was getting out of bed at six o'clock every morning, and sandwiching keeping fit between learning. Also he was fighting once a fortnight and averaging ten pounds a week income. And his mother continued to remind him that in the prize-ring he was plunging headlong to the devil.

HIS closest friend at this period was a retired pugilist with a good heart and a cauliflower ear. To him Artie observed:—

"Bill, I'm telling you straight, every time I pull on the gloves I get the shivers. It's been like that for five solid years. I went into this game for the money, and that's why I'm in it now. I've got to support a family and save a bit. But there's a limit. All I want is about a thousand quid, and when I touch that you couldn't get a glove on me again with a hydraulic ram."

"Rot!" commented his friend.

That spring he won an unforeseen victory from a very good man, on points. A little later he was matched against Bat Wilson and Artie took all the electricity out of him in seven rounds. Afterwards he met a supposed top-notcher, and nobody ever ventured the same supposition afterwards. Then, because the Shadwell Kid had the thousand pounds he had aimed at, he decided definitely to stop prize-fighting and go into business. Indeed, he told Bill, of the cauliflower ear, exactly that.

"Rot!" said Bill. "That's what they all say. But they all go on till they get their wings clipped."

"Well, you watch, then," said Arthur. "I tell you I've stopped."

And when Easter came Carroll treated himself to the first holiday in his life, and went to Brighton. The hostelry he selected was not the grandest in the world, but he always remembered it with deep affection, because it was here that he met the Inevitable She, and fell in love with her.

At luncheon he found himself placed with eleven strangers. Ten of them, however, he never noticed; for he had hardly shaken out his napkin when the girl next to him asked if he would mind passing her the salt.

Her voice attracted him, and when he traced it back to its terminal he saw that she was pretty. He passed the salt, and the girl, evidently not caring to be under obligation to a man who hadn't yet been introduced to her, retaliated by yielding him the butter. One thing led to another, and by five o'clock that afternoon he had bought her a pound of chocolates and she had given him some enamel sleeve-links which she had won at a whist drive. That night, on the beach, he began to confide in her.

As he visualized her when he was alone in his own room, he told himself that she was certainly the finest girl he had ever met. She was a blonde, or more specifically a kind of a sort of a dark blonde, with hair the colour of—well, it was a fine hair-colour, anyway—and she did it in style. And was she bright as well as beautiful? Only twenty-one!

"Why, I can hardly *believe*," she had said to him, "that so nice a boy as *you* are could have gone and done all that. I think it's perfectly thrilling. I think it's perfectly *won*-der-ful. And do you know what's the *most* wonderful part of it?"

Carroll, who was consisting exclusively of heart, feet, and hands, had shaken his head. "No."

"Why, it's to be strong enough to stop when you said you would. Oh, I know how hard it must have been for you, and how you hated to stop, but just the same, after you'd done it so *long*, and got to where you could have made *lots* of money at it so easy—well, it's like a novel, if you know what I mean, and you're the hero."

He had laughed deprecatingly, but it didn't spoil his disposition to be thought heroic.

"But I'm glad," she had gone on, "you gave it up before me and you ever met."

"Is that so? Why?"

"Well, I like to know you *have* done all that, and got that education and supported your people and everything, and I think it's perfectly wonderful. But I mean, if I knew to-morrow or next week you were going to have another fight, among those rowdy people—and feeling as I do about prize-fights in the first place—why, it'd be different."

Carroll looked blank. "That's funny. Am I any different from what I was before I stopped?"

"Oh, you are to *you*, of *course*. But you wouldn't be to me. That's because you're a man and I'm a lady. Maybe you think I'm unreasonable, but"—her smile had been roguish—"when we ladies *are* reasonable, you men sometimes don't like us so much."

HE rehearsed that dialogue from memory several times. The last sentence had contained such a delightful personal flavour. On the following day he bought carnations for her, and more chocolates. That evening they danced, and under his breath he hummed the words of the song, "I never knew I could love anybody, honey, like I'm loving you." Nor could she possibly take offence, because he was merely corroborating the orchestra.

"You're never, never, *never* going to fight again, though, *are* you?" she said.

"Never in a billion years!" he declared.

Her own holiday was only for the week-end, but when he put her in the train she gave him her London address, and told him to be sure and call, some time, whenever he happened to be in her neighbourhood. This was on Sunday night, and by Tuesday he had decided that Brighton was all right, but lonely.

So that on Wednesday he happened to be in her neighbourhood and called, dressed for the occasion. Father and mother were a little wary of him until conversation became easier, and then Mrs. Barton, fragile and white-haired, attempted to put Arthur at his ease by inquiring if Mr. Carroll (who weighed nine stone twelve in the ring) had ever had a—ahem!—a contest with this Mr. Dempsey, of whom there seemed to be so much in the papers nowadays.

That evening he took her to the pictures, and in the darkness he put his hand over hers, and when he dared to look at her she was smiling faintly. On the way home there was much silence. When they reached the girl's home and stood in the little hallway, Carroll cleared his throat. Suddenly he put his hand on her arm. He was as frightened as he had been on that night six years ago when he had knocked out Alec Greenburg. "Edie—you know I'm fond of yon—don't you?"

There was a little pause. "Yes, I do."

"Well, is there any chance for me? *Is* there?"

At last, just above a whisper, she said, "Oh, my dear—my dear!"

It might have been ten minutes afterwards that from the kitchen doorway her father exclaimed, "*Edith!*" And over his shoulder, still more loudly and agonizedly, "*Mother!*"

Then and there Edith's parents spoke to Carroll harshly of Carroll's youth, his inexperience, and, above all, his past career with its low associations; to which he responded stoutly that he was growing older every day, that a man who had made a living in the ring for six years needed no lessons in taking care of himself, and that boxing was now dead history in his life, anyway.

"He's *promised* me," said Edith, with brilliant colour. "He's *promised* me. Didn't you, Artie?"

"Certain I did," said Carroll. "Only I promised me first—before I so much as saw you."

But her parents were obdurate. Edith, however, made it clear to them that she was going to marry Artie whatever their attitude.

AND then, just as June crept softly in, Fate chose the moment to sandbag Carroll.

He came into her home very quietly and stood looking at her with a cracked smile. "Well," he said, with much deliberation, "I've had a K.O. where I least expected it. You know I put all my money into a bank. Well, the bank's busted!"

She was on her feet, aghast. "Artie!"

He nodded. "All I've got now is eight pounds seventeen and ninepence."

Consternation was in her eyes, utter consternation and bewilderment, and fear. "B-but—but, Artie," she faltered, "what're we going to *do?*"

"They say we'll get *something* back from the bank—some time. Well, promises wouldn't pay any instalments on the furniture. Now, listen. Two days ago I had an offer of a thousand pounds, win, lose, or draw, to fight that American, Ted Willis, on the eighth of July."

"Artie!"

He gestured. "Willis has been trying to get a match for the championship, but White wouldn't meet him unless he beat me first. Well, I hadn't answered."

She had drawn a trifle away from him and her eyes looked as though they had been starched. "Artie! If you went and did *that*—after all I said—and after all *you* said——"

"Edie, don't you want us to get married?"

"Haven't I told you I'd be married on three pounds a week—if that was all you got?"

"I haven't got anything. You an' me want to be married, don't we? And I'm nearly broke. And I've got my folks on my hands. And I've got to sign up for this fight quick, or I'll lose the chance. Just one more fight—ten rounds, an' I give you *my* word it's nothin' *I'm* looking for. Ted Willis can knock the stuffing out of me, but——"

"But I *told* you! And you promised! You *promised!* I couldn't stand it! I couldn't!"

"Couldn't stand *what?*"

"Having you—*you* know! You can't! You promised! I won't let you!"

"Edie, be reasonable. How could I marry you if I didn't?"

"And you think I'd marry you if you *did?*"

They stared at each other. "Dear, I thought you were different from other girls. I promised, but if I get it in the neck for the sake of my own mother and my own sister, you'd give me the chuck——"

"If you could fight *now*, after all I said you could do it any time. And if you could break your word——"

"Edie! How did *I* know I was going bust?" Carroll wet his lips. "You say you won't marry me if I fight, but I say I can't marry you if I don't. Don't you see it's the only way out?"

"Do you mean it, Artie?"

"I mean it."

She came to him swiftly. "Oh, Artie, for *my* sake—please, darling, don't you understand? You can't slide back. I'd wait for you, and save everything I could. I wouldn't care if it was two, three years. Only, if you—if you——"

She had never seen him so close-lipped, so unbending. "But I've *got* to fight Willis, dear. I've got to get some money, and get it quick. I'm going to sign articles tomorrow. You've got your dad. All *they've* got is me."

Slowly she stripped from her finger the ring he had given her. "Then—you'd better take this back, Arthur."

After a long delay, during which his eyes never wavered, he took it, and surveyed it minutely. "All right, Edie, if you mean it. Would you mind if I kissed you good-bye—and would you mind wishing me luck? This Willis is a real fighter."

She was hysterical. "Luck? *Luck?* Art Carroll, if after all I said to you, all I've been to you, you go on with that fight, I hope that other fellow gives you the worst licking a man ever got! *That's* what I hope! I do! I was a fool! I believed

"I can hardly believe that so nice a boy as you are could have gone and done all that. I think it's perfectly thrilling."

you when you said you had finished. I hope I never see you again! Unless it was to get my wish and see that he'd spoilt your looks."

He went, without another word.

"And that was the girl," he said bitterly to himself, "I'd have let Ted Willis knock my head off for!"

CARROLL trained with the listlessness of a hound in hot weather. Sleep had deserted him, and he had no appetite. In his quarters he had received a letter from his mother and another from his sister, and between the two he gathered that, because he was going to fight, nothing better than a particularly unpleasant hereafter was in store for him.

He wasn't in training, and he knew it, but he didn't care. He told himself that he was fighting for a fixed price, and that Ted Willis was at liberty to send him to slumberland at his early convenience. It was his last fight, anyway; and nothing mattered but the money that would support his family while he was getting on to his feet.

When he awoke on the day of the fight, he was tired and joyless; and he was six pounds under normal. A serious situation, that, for a lightweight, but Carroll wasn't even concerned.

In a chaste blue dressing-gown with orange lapels, the Shadwell Kid clambered up under the ropes to the ring. There, restless and unhappy, he waited for Willis, but the moment he entered the ring the Kid felt there was something vaguely familiar about him.

Also, Arthur wondered about Edith. She had never sent him a word. She hoped he would lose. Well, that was all right. He didn't care much. He wondered how badly Willis wanted to win. He grinned across at him. Willis scowled back. Then a lull. A suggestive lull. And a cold torpor creeping over him. A deadly diffidence. The referee was beckoning. To the middle of the ring. A handshake. Like a whip-lash across his senses—the gong.

Not far away an attendant was struggling to hear somebody over the telephone. "What's that, miss? Why, there isn't any chance at all. *Stop the fight?*" He gasped, and then spluttered with laughter. "Why, miss? Why, *I* don't know whether he's seen the papers or not. Why, no, miss. Nothing could get the Kid to the telephone. The fight's *on*. G'bye." He quaked with mirth.

Upstairs Mr. Willis of San Francisco and Mr. Carroll of Shadwell were sparring briskly.

They sparred, and Willis whipped over a hook to the Kid's jaw. It hurt. Involuntarily the Kid clinched. "Hullo, Kid! What's wrong with you?"

Willis half-whispered it in the Kid's ear, and, on the breakaway, he landed a savage swing to the head. The Kid was hurt again, but he was also puzzled. As if, still asleep, he were trying to interpret a nightmare. Puzzled, because he couldn't recognize his own body. Were these his arms, so heavy and stiff? Were these his legs—these wooden lumps that wouldn't let him step with his usual footwork? Not that it made any difference, but it was an odd sensation. And what were people yelling for?

Meanwhile the reporters were busy.

"Willis shook the Kid with another left hook. The Kid tried to clinch, but Willis got away. So far the Shadwell lad had not touched his opponent. Willis landed another over the heart, ducked out of a clinch, and got another in to the head, afterwards knocking the Kid through the ropes with a left to the jaw. Willis landed right and left to the body as the gong went. Unquestionably it was Willis's round."

In his corner the Kid was panting wildly, but he couldn't relax. He was seeing visions which glittered and danced before him like an old-fashioned cinema. His mother and Edie were mixed up in that; and beside him somebody was annoying him excessively with towels and talk. The bell! And Willis smirking at him, and chattering.

"I hear you've got a girl," Willis muttered to him. "That why you left the ring?"

That made the Kid furious, and so:—

"SECOND ROUND.—*The Kid clinched immediately, and Willis was saying something to him in the clinches. The Kid rushed at Willis wildly, his guard down, and got two heavy blows on the head, his lip being cut. He landed a soft left, but Willis drove him round the ring and punished him severely right up to the gong.*"

Once again in the chair: more towelling, more visions. Water, and a whiff of ammonia. Noises in his ears. He remembers that Willis said something that made him angry: what could it have been? And then—oh, *so* soon!—that infernal gong. He doesn't know why he has to get up, but he knows that he *has* to. They've paid him for it. They've paid him the last money he will ever take to be a human punching-bag.

"THIRD ROUND.—*Willis drove the Kid through the ropes with a terrific smash to the jaw. They clinched. The Kid was almost out. Willis inflicted awful punishment in these clinches. The Kid looked like a novice. Willis knocked the Kid down for the count of seven. The Kid got up, but Willis floored him again with a right to the jaw. The Kid got up very groggy and went down for the third time, but the gong saved him.*"

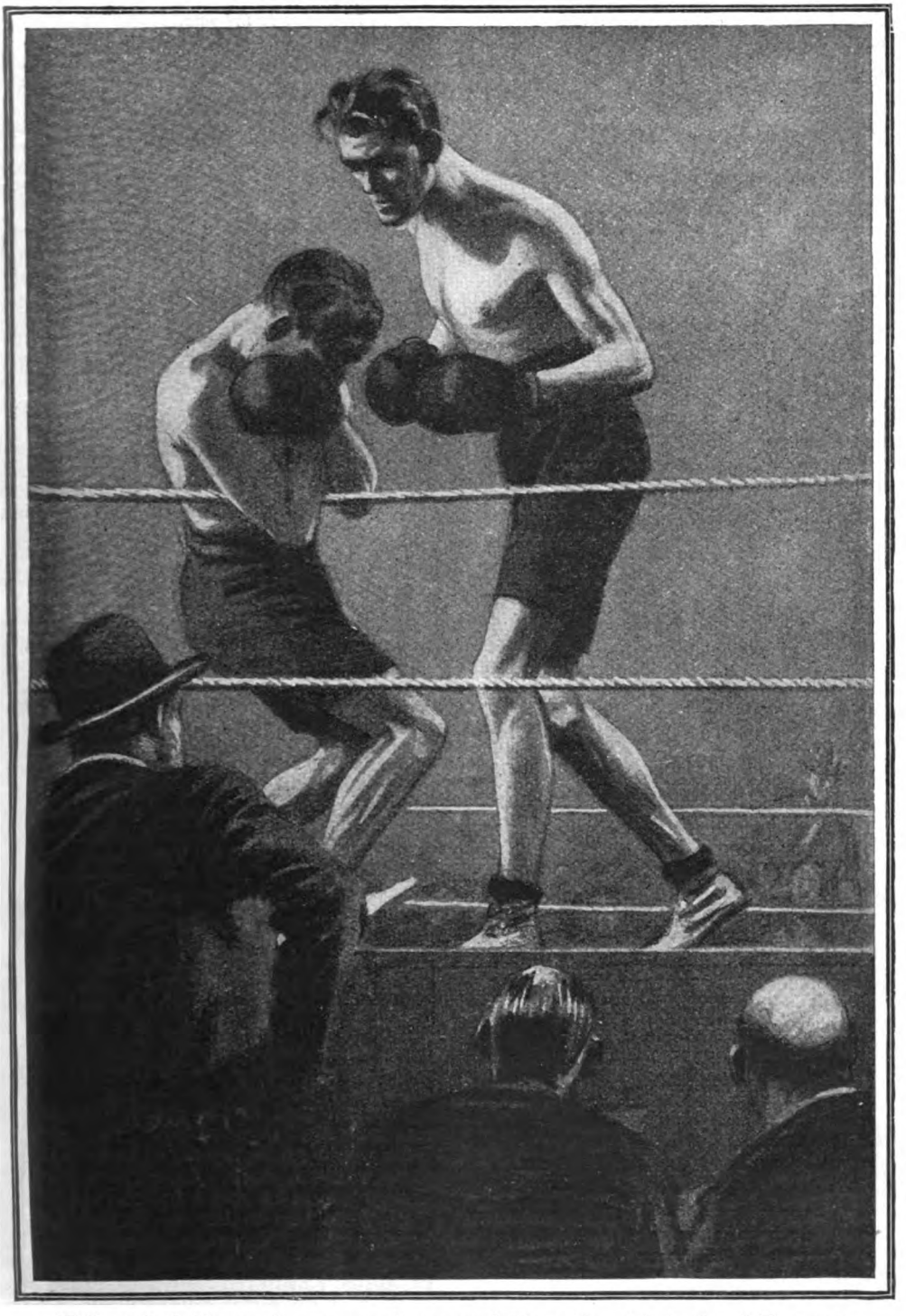
He had heard a confused roaring like the waves of the sea. Felt a blow so hard that he knew it must be the floor, which had also taken to hitting him. That hardly seemed fair. Willis was enough. Then the lights had gone out. He had returned through a world of velvet darkness shot with flame. His brain was attached to his body by a scarlet thread of pain, and the thread snapped with the buzzing of a million bees. He was in the chair, and a gentleman named Arthur Carroll was saying to somebody named the Shadwell Kid: "Well, she gets her wish. She gets her wish. She gets her wish. And the sooner the quicker."

"FOURTH ROUND.—*Willis was obviously trying for a quick knock-out. He landed right and left smashes to the jaw. The Kid was helpless. Willis rushed him to the ropes and staggered him with a left hook.*"

"That puts us square, Kid. Don't you remember me, Kid?" Here he landed to the head again. "Don't you remember Alec Greenburg? Well, I'm him."

"They clinched. Willis was talking again. He put the Kid down for the count of nine. The Kid barely saved himself. The Kid landed a hard left to the body. That was his first real punch in four rounds. Willis forced the fighting, but the Kid kept away."

Alec Greenburg! Ted Willis! No wonder he had looked familiar. Alec Greenburg! Yes, good Lord, it *was!* It



Willis rushed him to the ropes and staggered him with a left hook. "That puts us square, Kid. Don't you remember me, Kid?"

was Alec, bullet head and all. How easy it had been to lick Alec that night. *So* easy! And so hard to-night. Edie flickering in his thoughts again: she hoped he'd be licked. What? By Alec Greenburg? Yes, the features were familiar. So Alec had gone out to America and learned how to fight. He certainly had. And taken a different name, too. And what was Alec—Willis—saying?

"Much obliged to you, Kid. This means I get a fight with White. Look out. I'm going to slam you one."

He did it. But there was gradually oozing into the Kid's addled brain a certain conviction. Ted Willis might lick him, but Alec Greenburg couldn't. And this was Alec. He knew, with absolute knowledge, that if he could last to the tenth round, he could win. He didn't know where this conviction came from, but it was as sure as the nose on Alec's face. Suddenly the Kid was Arctic cold. This was Alec—and the dirty little guttersnipe had dared to speak of the angel—the angel whom the Kid had lost, but who was still angelic—in the ring. He laughed. "I knocked you out once, Alec," he said. "Maybe I can do it again."

"FIFTH ROUND.—*The Kid was still staying away, and holding Willis off with a straight left. Willis was working hard for a knock-out. He knocked the Kid down with a vicious swing to the jaw, but the Kid was up and recovering. Willis missed a K.O. by an inch. The Kid landed heavily but he seemed nearly finished. At the gong they were in a clinch, and the referee had to pry them apart.*"

"Your girl won't know you, Kid."

"You're as easy for me now as you were before, Alec."

"SIXTH ROUND.—*The pace had told on Willis, and he slowed up a little. The Kid had made a miraculous recovery; but he wouldn't force the fighting. He made Willis chase him all over the ring. The round was even.*

"SEVENTH ROUND.—*The Kid had recovered some of his form. He was now doing all the talking in the clinches, and worried Willis by clever boxing. Willis struck hard, but the Kid made him miss repeatedly. The Kid landed several short lefts.*

"EIGHTH ROUND.—*The Kid was stronger, and boxing very flashily, but his punches had no sting. Willis was not hurt but was tiring rapidly. The Kid was still keeping away and making Willis come to him. For the first time the Kid had slightly the best of the in-fighting. Then, just before the gong, the Kid knocked Willis out with a straight left to the jaw.*"

IT was more than an hour later when the Kid arrived, alone, in a taxi-cab, at the house where Edie lived. He got out of the cab wearily and gazed up at a certain window. There were lights in it—yes, unmistakably—so that he paid the driver, forgot his change, and went wearily to the door.

The Kid was heady and weak. He rang the bell, and when the door opened he was standing there, and swaying a little, and smiling.

His mouth had been cut, and then Willis had done some accurate sharpshooting for the right eye, and once had got home a tremendous smash on the right ear. Yes, Willis had nearly spoiled him—but Carroll smiled.

"Just dropped in," he said, with a great effort, "so you could see me again—as you wanted to. Only you didn't get your wish, Edie. Sorry, but you didn't get your wish. *He* didn't knock *me* out."

Slowly her pupils grew and grew. Her lips had parted; one hand was over her heart. "You—won?"

"Yes." Again he swayed. He was exhausted. "Just dropped in—so you could have a look. But I put him to sleep. My last fight. I'm going into partnership with a friend in South Africa. He went out there two years ago, fruit growing, and he's doing well. He's asked me to join him, so I'm going. I'm leaving this week. Only you didn't get your wish."

Through the dusk which enveloped him he could feel her arms. He could feel her lips. She was crying over him. "You won!—you won! Oh, my dear, wonderful boy! Oh, I'm *so* proud of you! I tried and *tried* to telephone to you, dear. And you *won!*"

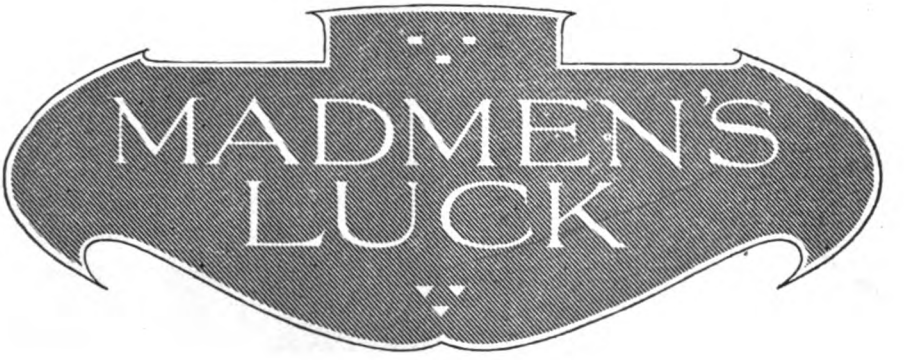
His arm was lead, but he succeeded in lifting it to touch her face. He was so tired that he didn't know what he was saying.

"Yes. Knocked him out. Just as Lanigan said I could. So I just dropped in—I'm leaving for Rhodesia——"

She had read in the evening paper the statement that those who had money in his bank would get nearly all of it back; some of it within a week. But she knew that Carroll was in no mood for statistics.

She held him to her as though he had been a child. "Yes, dear. Yes, Artie, dear. Listen! Please listen, darling. Are you too exhausted just to tell me what day the boat sails—that we're going on? You're a man, but I'm a lady—I've got to collect some clothes——"

THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART.—8.



BY

E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

ILLUSTRATED BY S. SEYMOUR LUCAS

A YOUNG man, newly arrived in Monte Carlo, strolled along the arcade towards Ciro's Restaurant about half-past twelve on a brilliant February morning, with the intention of ordering a table for lunch. He had scarcely exchanged greetings with the *maître d'hôtel* when he stopped short and gazed eagerly at the occupants of a distant and retired table.

"Tell me," he inquired, "do you know the name of the man and woman sitting over there?"

The waiter glanced discreetly in the direction indicated.

"I do not know their names, sir," he admitted, "but they are very good patrons. They come early to lunch most days and always choose an inconspicuous table."

Something in the woman's expression at that moment appealed to the young man's sense of memory. He crossed the room towards the two and approached them with a confident smile.

"Dr. Londe, isn't it? I beg your pardon, Sir Joseph Londe, and Sister Judith? I should have known you anywhere, sir, but I was not so sure about Sister," he added, with an admiring glance at the very beautiful and perfectly-gowned woman.

The man who had been accosted by the name of Londe looked steadily at the newcomer. The woman was smiling at him, but it was not a smile of recognition.

"You are mistaken, sir," the former declared. "My name is not Londe, I am not a doctor, and I do not know you."

The young man seemed dumbfounded. He stared at the two in a bewildered fashion.

"I'm sure I beg your pardon, sir," he stammered. "I may have been mistaken about the lady, though I didn't think that possible, but you, sir—you took my leg off, back of Ypres, in 'sixteen, a marvellous piece of surgery, everyone said. Brookes, my name is—Ernest Brookes. I was a second lieutenant in the Sherwood Foresters then."

"All I can say, Mr. Brookes, is that you are mistaken," was the unequivocal response. "My name is Broadbent. I am not a doctor, and I was never at the war."

The young man made a somewhat clumsy and apologetic retreat, and took a table some distance away. What made his confusion worse was his consciousness of the fact that the lady was laughing at him in a childish but very engaging fashion. She was suddenly sober, however, when she caught the glint in her husband's eyes a few minutes later.

"How should you like," the latter asked, cruelly, "to go back to Chigwell again for

Copyright, 1923, by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

the rest of your life? You can remember the days there. Does the thought of them appeal to you?"

She shook with horror. The tears were in her eyes. She was like a beautiful passion-flower, revelling in the sunshine of life, revelling in the silk which clung to her limbs, the perfume still haunting her from her bath, the full sensuous joy of youth and beauty. The grey horror of his suggestion was like a stab—the coarse clothes and food, the ugliness, the sexlessness of it!

"Joseph, don't," she begged. "You are too clever ever to let that happen."

"If I am left to myself, yes," he snarled. "It was you who insisted upon coming here. You wanted to deck yourself out like a butterfly and flap your fine wings for men to see. I was a fool to give in."

"What about the gambling?" she asked, with a slow smile. "You were short of money, you said. Who was it discovered that you must win?"

He nodded sombrely.

"Fools have luck. The mad make a certainty of it," he muttered. "You certainly stumbled upon that truth. You should play yourself, Judith. You are worse than I am. The gap in your brain is bigger."

For a single moment the sweet childishness of her expression vanished. There were evil things in her face—hatred, which flared to meet his. A revealing moment, carrying with it a long trail of reminiscence. It passed. She laughed lightly.

"You were wrong to have sent the young man away," she remarked. "You might have dealt with him more safely."

They wandered to the Sporting Club later, to all appearance a normal couple, a harmless, stalwart, middle-aged husband, with a beautiful young wife. Women envied her clothes and her manner of wearing them. Men asked for her smiles. She was subtly aware of both, and insidiously responsive to the latter.

"I am going to play high," Londe told her. "It may be our last chance."

She sighed.

"It will break my heart to go," she declared.

"We should never have come," he rejoined. "A totally sane person of normal intelligence, like Daniel Rocke, is usually easy enough to outwit, but once in ten times he may blunder his way to success. I am uneasy since that young man recognized me."

He played for half an hour on the even chances in maximums. Gradually his pile grew. When he became conspicuous he changed his table. He had no fancy for the limelight in which the large winner sits. Suddenly he altered his tactics. He thrust some mille notes towards the croupier.

"Quatorze en plein, les carrés et chevaux, transversal, treize—dix-huit, maximum," he whispered.

"Parfaitement, monsieur," the man replied, throwing them on the table and arranging them with his rake. "Quatorze, les carrés et les chevaux, et transversal, treize—dix huit, pour le maximum."

"You are mistaken, sir. My name The young man seemed dumb-

The wheel spun on to its destiny, the hand that guided it beyond the comprehension of any man. The warning cry of "Rien ne va plus" preceded the little click of the falling ball by only a few seconds.

"Quatorze, rouge et pair," the croupier's monotonous voice announced. There was a little murmur. The business of paying commenced. Londe's winnings seemed fabulous. He asked for mille notes and stuffed them away in his pocket. His stake he left on the table.

The wheel spun again.

"Treize, noir et impair," the croupier announced.

"Deux carrés et un cheval pour moi," Londe murmured, "aussi le transversal et treize—dix-huit."

"C'est ça, monsieur," the man assented, counting out a further huge pile of bills.

"Encore quatorze en plein, les carrés et chevaux, le transversal et treize—dix-huit, pour le maximum," Londe directed.

The stake was made. This time a murmur of positive excitement ran through the crowd as the croupier announced the winning number.

"Quatorze, rouge et pair!"

Londe collected his winnings, dropped a mille note in the *boîte*, and strolled away. In a corner of the bar he found Judith. For a single moment his lips closed tight and there was a glitter in his eyes. She was seated side by side with the young man who had accosted them in Ciro's, to all appearance engaged in confidential conversation. The young man's admiration was perhaps a little too openly displayed, and nothing in his companion's attitude indicated rebuke. Londe crossed the room towards them. Judith looked up at him with a lazy smile.

"I have been telling Mr. Brookes that you would like to speak to him," she remarked. "How opulent you seem! Are those mille notes with which your pockets are stuffed, and, if so, can I have the ermine wrap?"

"I have been winning," he answered, shortly. "Get the ermine wrap if you want it. I will wait here."

He handed her a packet of notes. She sprang up with the eager cry of a child. Her cheeks were already flushed with anticipation.

"You dear thing!" she exclaimed. "Joseph, you are adorable. I will meet you here at seven o'clock."

She forgot to say good-bye to the young man. He seemed suddenly to have lost all interest for her. She moved across the room, divinely graceful, a happy, beautiful young woman, without a care in the world. There was scarcely a person who did not look at her with admiration. Brookes seemed almost stupefied. He gazed after her until she had passed out of sight.

is not Londe, I am not a doctor, and I do not know you." founded. He stared at the two in a bewildered fashion.

"Sister Judith!" he muttered. "Impossible!"

"Nevertheless, true," Londe observed, calmly. "I desire to offer you my apologies. I *am* Sir Joseph Londe, and it was I who operated on you in the Field Hospital behind Ypres."

"I was sure of it," the young man declared. "But why——"

"Stop!" Londe interrupted. "I desire to ask you a question. Have you mentioned meeting me to anyone in Monte Carlo?"

"I haven't spoken to a soul here," was the earnest reply, "except you and your wife. I don't know anyone."

"Good!" Londe exclaimed. "I have reasons for wishing to preserve my *incognito*. That is why I denied myself to you at Ciro's."

"Sir," Brookes said, firmly, "I am not likely to forget that you saved my life. You have only to hint at a request and it is granted. I shall not mention to a soul in the world either that I have seen you here or that I know who you are."

"Under those conditions," Londe assured him, "my wife and I—you realize, of course, that I married Sister Judith?—will be happy to renew our acquaintance with you. Let me ask you this, by the by. How did it happen that you recognized me? I have certainly changed a good deal since those days."

"By a miracle," the young man replied. "Sister Judith—I beg your pardon, Lady Londe—was leaning forward asking you a question, and you were frowning a little. It was just a familiar trick of attitude, and the voice. When you denied it I came to the conclusion that I must have made a mistake. If I may say so, sir, your wife seems to have grown so much younger and so marvellously beautiful."

"She will be flattered to hear your opinion," Londe remarked, with faint sarcasm; "that is, if you have not already confided it to her. If my memory serves me right, you were not in the regular army," he went on.

Brookes shook his head.

"I am a tea and rubber planter in a small way, sir," he announced. "I came home to join up, and I've been back in Ceylon two years. I got off the P. and O. boat at Marseilles to take a fortnight of my holiday here—the first since the war."

"Then you have no friends in the place?" Londe persisted.

"I haven't come across a soul I know yet," the young man answered, a little disconsolately.

"You will dine with us, I trust, tonight," Londe invited. "We have a small villa at Cap Martin. A carriage will take you there in a very short time. The Villa Violette, at nine o'clock, if that hour is agreeable. My wife likes to remain here until eight."

"I shall be delighted," was the enthusiastic assent.

LONDE wandered off, left the place, and strolled across to the Casino. A fit of restlessness, a black fit, was upon him. The sight of this former patient of his had brought back a cloud of memories. He turned abruptly away and stood upon the Terrace—deserted at that hour of a grey afternoon—looking seaward. The old panorama of horror, of blood and misery, rolled itself out before him. He heard the shrieks of the wounded, the hoarse cries of the stretcher-bearers, the grim background of booming guns, and the snapping volleys of machine-gun fire. On came the stretchers—an endless, ghastly stream. Here a bearer vomited and collapsed, there a nurse fainted. He alone stood immovable, stern, with the kindness of infinite skill, enduring beyond the belief of man. Once the earth rolled up beneath his feet, but the shrieking of the wounded soldier whom two sobbing bearers had laid before him brought the strength back to his arm. On that particular man he performed a miracle. Day and night were the same, save that the night was a little more awful in its mystery. That little amphitheatre was the altar upon which he had sacrificed the vital part of his life! He leaned over the wall and gazed seawards. Something had gone wrong with him somewhere. A link between body and soul had snapped. It was a great price.

A storm of rain drove him into the Casino. He wandered from table to table, collecting at each a little stack of plaques and notes, staying nowhere long enough to excite more than a passing comment, but almost invariably winning, always a solitary, brooding figure. At seven o'clock he returned to the Sporting Club. Contrary to her custom, Judith was playing, and there was already a great pile of plaques and bills in front of her. Brookes was seated on her left. A very meagre pile of counters represented his capital, and there was already a strained look about his face and a nervous glitter in his eyes. Londe smiled.

"Any luck?" he asked, as he leaned over and thrust a plaque on twenty-nine.

Brookes glanced up at him feverishly.

"Rotten!" he declared. "I have lost about all I brought with me."

He twitched his moustache nervously and pushed the remainder of his little pile on red. The croupier's monotonous voice broke the few seconds of tense silence which

followed the click of the little ball as it sank into its chosen place.

"Vingt-neuf, noir et impair."

Londe gathered in his winnings with imperturbable face. The young man sat quite still for several moments. He seemed to be staring into vacancy. Then he rose a little abruptly and made his way towards the door. Londe glanced at his wife. She nodded almost imperceptibly, gathered up her winnings, and followed him, floating down the room like a gorgeous butterfly with the perfume of the flowers upon which she had rested shaken from her clothes. She found Brookes seated alone in a corner of the bar.

"I have come to have a cocktail with you," she murmured.

He looked at her longingly. There was an expression partly of embarrassment, partly of despair, in his face.

"I'm afraid you'll have to pay for it, then," he laughed, harshly. "I've lost all I brought with me."

She smiled, and gave an order to the waiter.

"You're very foolish to bet against a run," she told him. "I shall give you a lecture to-night."

"To-night!" he sighed, ruefully. "But how can I come? I haven't even enough money left to pay my carriage."

She slipped a mille note into his hand.

"I shall lend you this," she whispered, "because I like you, and because I will not be disappointed of your coming."

He gazed at her adoringly.

"How wonderful you are!" he exclaimed.

She suffered her hand to rest upon his for a moment.

"Here come our cocktails," she announced. "We will drink to our further acquaintance. So far as I remember, you were a very troublesome patient."

"I shall drink," he declared, impressively, "to things of which I dare not speak."

She set down her glass empty and rose to her feet.

"I must go back to my husband," she said. "To-night, at nine o'clock."

IT was, in its way, a wonderful dinner, served by a typical French butler, and cooked by his wife. Londe was an excellent host, Judith a seductive hostess. Brookes expanded with the wine and the glamour of his surroundings. He told them both his story. After the war he had gone back to Ceylon, to find his small estate in a parlous condition. Then the price of rubber, of which half his planting consisted, had fallen to nothing. In despair, after two years of unsuccessful toiling, he had closed down the estate, collected all the money he could, which amounted only to about nine hundred pounds, and come to England, for a holiday first and then to make a fresh start. That nine hundred pounds he had lost at the tables that afternoon. Judith was a little scornful. Londe only smiled. The young man drank more wine.

"I must make money somehow," he declared. "I can't think why I can't win at the tables like you do. Everything you back seems to turn up."

Londe's smile became more evident.

"There is a reason for that," he remarked.

"What do you mean?" Brookes demanded, eagerly. "Do you play on a system?"

Londe shook his head. Judith laughed.

"We need no system," the former confided. "We win always because neither my wife nor I are perfectly sane. A mad person, as you know, will win at any game of chance."

"I beg your pardon," the young man ventured, a little bewildered.

"I mean exactly what I said," Londe continued, with dignity. "You yourself know something of our activities during the war. We did twice as much work as any other surgeon and nurse. In the end a small portion of my brain became affected. My wife, curiously enough, developed sympathetic symptoms."

"God bless my soul!" the young man gasped.

"There is nothing so extraordinary in the matter," Londe proceeded, stiffly. "A small spot in my brain became discoloured; it became, in fact, red instead of the ordinary grey, which, you may be aware, is the colour of a normal person's brain. An operation was indicated. All that I needed was a small atom of healthy matter to be annexed to mine, in a manner known only to me. Now, I'm going to tell you something that I have never told any other living person. I advertised for a subject. Shall I tell you the result?"

"Yes, yes, certainly."

"I was incarcerated in a lunatic asylum —my wife and I—for over a year."

Brookes was past speech. He lifted his glass. He gazed at the speaker half-fearfully, yet with a terrible curiosity.

"When they let me out," Londe continued, "I tried again to find a subject, only this time I knew better than to advertise. I investigated the brains of several persons who happened to come my way, but in each case I found a small red discoloration just in the same position as my own. For the present, therefore, I have abandoned the attempt. My efforts seem to have created an absurd prejudice against me on the part

of the police and other troublesome people, and, to tell you the truth, I have lost faith, to some extent, in my own theory of exchange. Besides, my wife and I find a certain compensation in our present state."

"You really believe that you are both a little mad still, then?" Brookes faltered.

"Without a doubt," his host assented. "I am perfectly aware that both my wife and I, in different and varying degrees, lack an absolutely sane poise towards life. But what does that matter? See!"

He rose to his feet, and drew on one side the blinds which concealed the window. From outside a stone balcony looked down upon gardens glorious in the full moonlight, and sloping to the still Mediterranean. There were cypress trees like black frescoes against the deep blue background, orange trees bending with their load of fruit, a few olive trees, a grove of firs, a mass of flowering shrubs, oleanders, a bed of freesias, whose disturbing perfume crept into the room. From below came the haunting sound of the soft lapping of the waves upon the shore.

"We can appreciate beauty," Londe pointed out, "just as you can. We have gifts—cunning, I suppose you would call the chief one—which enable us to match our wits against most people's. We have lost the rack of nerves—look at my wife, she is more beautiful and younger now than during or before the war. All that we lack, the scientists would say, is soul—and who on earth is not the better for being without a soul?"

Londe dropped the curtain and turned back into the room. His wife's hand rested on the young man's arm. He felt the pressure of her fingers, and his brain reeled with the wonder of it. He was, after all, quite an ordinary person.

"I shall go to my *salon*," she murmured, moving towards the door. "Please come soon."

BROOKES resumed his place at the table and sipped the old brandy which his host had produced. He was still in a state of feverish bewilderment. Londe, in his way, seemed also excited. His eyes were bright, his lips tense.

"I have a proposition to make to you, Mr. Brookes," he announced. "Do you care to hear it?"

"Rather," the young man agreed, a little recklessly. "If there's any money at the end of it, it will be the more welcome."

"There will be all the money you can use at the end of it," Londe promised. "Briefly, the situation is this. You know, of your own experience, that I am a great surgeon."

"I have heard it said that you are the greatest surgeon in the world," was the emphatic assent.

"It is possibly true," Londe acquiesced. "I am also a great scientist. I have invented a new anæsthetic which has marvellous properties. I have a tube in my pocket now. I could take the strength from your limbs with a single whiff, whilst leaving your brain normal. Or I have another one, with which I could entirely reverse the process. Would you like me to experiment——"

"No! For God's sake, no!" the young man interrupted.

Londe smiled tolerantly.

"Just as you like, of course. Now, I have made another discovery which I am anxious to try," he continued, leaning back in his chair and lighting a cigarette. "I still believe that I shall be able some day to regain my sanity by my principle of brain transfusion, but my last discovery is this. I can make you insane like me. I could give you a draught to-night and you would awake to-morrow to all appearances exactly the same person, but you yourself would be conscious of the change. You would be lighter-hearted, gayer, happier, and in some things—such as gambling, for instance—your success would be extraordinary. You would be free, too, from the thraldom of soul."

"But I should be mad," the young man muttered.

Londe shrugged his shoulders.

"Are you so happy as you are, and is your future so assured?" he asked. "Give yourself over to me for experiment, and to-morrow you can make a million francs at the tables and a million more whenever you choose."

Brookes looked around him, dazed but already shaking with excitement.

"This isn't some sort of an Arabian Nights, is it?" he asked, with a clumsy laugh.

"I am making a perfectly practical proposition to you," his host assured him.

"What do I have to do about it?"

"You submit to a slight injection before you leave this house," Londe explained, "and you take a draught which I shall prepare for you."

The young man rose from his seat and walked to the window. His heart was pounding. Somehow or other, although he had affected incredulity, he felt a curious conviction that this amazing offer was a perfectly genuine one. Suddenly he swung round.

"I consent," he announced. "I might

as well. There is nothing else left for me."

Londe accepted his decision as a matter of course.

"I shall now go to prepare the drug," he declared. "It takes careful mixing. When you have offered yourself for my experiment, I shall give you ten of these mille notes to start with. Afterwards, your future is in your own hands. Do me the favour to entertain my wife for a quarter of an hour. You will find her in the *salon* across the hall."

The young man, in a state now of fierce excitement, hastened to obey his host. He was an unambitious youth, who, save for that brief period of the war, had lived, for the most part, a quiet life in middle-class surroundings. He had certainly never been brought into social contact with any woman so lovely and engaging as Judith. Her very presence intoxicated him. He felt himself trembling as he heard his host's retreating footsteps, and he himself turned the handle of the door of the *salon*. Judith was half sitting, half reclining, upon the sofa as he entered. The flash of her white arm, as she motioned him to a seat by her side, maddened him. She wore a wonderful blue brocaded gown, fastened around her waist by a silken girdle, seductively unrestraining. She saw his confusion and laughed at him. He leaned towards her, but she held him away.

"Silly boy," she murmured. "You lose your head so easily, and now you have lost all your money."

"I shall make more, a great deal more," he declared, passionately. "Do you know that you are the most beautiful thing on earth?"

"Foolish!" she mocked. "There, you may hold my hand. I like you very much, but——"

"I love you," he broke in. 'I adore you, Judith. Come back to Ceylon with me."

She laughed outright.

"And what about my husband?" she asked. "And what should we live on? I am a very extravagant woman."

"I can make money," he assured her. "To win you I shall do it."

"I like you. I have affection to give," she told him, "but I warn you that I am a pagan. I will love you a little when you give me a present like this."

She held up her arm, from which drooped a strange bracelet, a thin band of platinum and a single rose-tinted pearl.

"I will do it," he promised. "One kiss, Judith, one kiss."

She leaned towards him, then suddenly drew back with a warning gesture. The door had opened noiselessly. Londe stood upon the threshold. His face was imperturbable. He appeared not to notice his guest's embarrassment. He simply stood there.

"I have a liqueur I am anxious for you to try, Mr. Brookes," he said. "Afterwards, perhaps my wife will give us some music."

The young man hesitated. For a single moment a queer divination of evil seemed to oppress him. A black gulf yawned at his feet—on the other side of it Londe, impenetrable, yet menacing. He had an impulse to fly from the house. Then he heard Judith's whisper, low and caressing, carrying with it the spice of promise.

"Go with him now, and return."

He moved towards the door, crossed the white stone-flagged hall, and followed his host into the dining-room. An old dust-covered brandy bottle stood upon the table and two Napoleon glasses. Londe served the liqueurs with meticulous care.

"Eighteen eighteen," he murmured. "Gold and sunshine. The best things in life."

Brookes drained the contents of his glass. He felt a delicious sense of fragrant warmth steal through his veins. The touch of the brandy upon his palate was like velvet. Londe drew another bottle from behind a bowl of roses, poured out a wineglassful into a fresh glass, and passed it over.

"Now I want you to try that," he invited.

His guest did not hesitate. He raised the glass to his lips and drained its contents. It was tasteless, yet somehow suggestive of marvellous and unexpected potency. He saw Londe's face, sinister but triumphant, and then a hundred faces. A mist and a roar. Afterwards nothing.

THE morning was full of surprises to Brookes. He woke with an unusual sense of buoyancy, to find himself in his hotel bedroom, the sound of his bath water running and the valet moving about the room laying out his clothes. He sat up in bed.

"Hullo!" he exclaimed. "How the devil did I get here?"

The man smiled a little knowingly.

"Monsieur is in his own room," he observed.

"But I don't remember coming home last night," Brookes confessed.

"Monsieur arrived home soon after one o'clock," the man confided. "He was accompanied by an older gentleman who had the kindness to give me a twenty-franc

note. Monsieur had, without doubt, been dining well," he added.

Brookes felt absolutely no more curiosity about the events of the night before. He sprang out of bed, whistling lightly to himself. From the moment he stepped into his bath he was conscious of a new light-heartedness which he seemed to accept as a matter of course. He shouted for his breakfast, which he devoured eagerly, dressed with interest, and strolled out afterwards on to the Terrace, full of an exhilaration such as he had not experienced for years, a child-like delight in his surroundings which took no account of his recent despair. He talked to all his neighbours in the famous bar where he took his morning cocktail, and made several new acquaintances, strolled across to the Casino, played without anxiety and with a new sense of certainty, and before lunch, which he shared with some of his new friends, had won a trifle over forty milles. Four o'clock found him at the Sporting Club, engaged in an eager search for Judith. He played for a short time with a curious loss of all sense of excitement, won a pocketful of plaques and notes, but left the tables directly Londe and Judith entered. He hurried to them with all the eagerness of a schoolboy. They both looked at him curiously.

"Winning?" Londe inquired.

Brookes nodded indifferently—he who had played with beads of perspiration on his forehead only yesterday, watching every stake as though it had been a matter of life or death.

"Yes, I've won," he admitted. "What about some tea, Sister Judith? Let's find a corner in the bar, or shall we go somewhere and watch the dancers?"

His eyes sought hers eagerly, devouringly. She was gracious, but with a certain restraint in her manner, which he was at first too happy to appreciate.

"I've come to play," she told him. "We'll have some tea first, though, if you like."

Londe strolled off and the young man carried Judith away to a corner table in the bar. He had lost all his nervous incoherence of the night before. He plunged at once into superlatives. He made open and unabashed love to her. He was eager, impetuous, almost compelling. She, on her part, was all the time gracious. She at no time rebuked him, but he felt, somehow or other, conscious of a barrier which had not been there on the preceding day. He refused to accept the possibility of its existence, however. He laughed to scorn the idea of failure.

"You are an ardent lover to-day," she murmured, "but I have come to see you play. Remember, you must win."

He suffered himself to be led, reluctantly, into the rooms. At seven o'clock he had won half a million francs.

"You must dine with me, both of you," he insisted.

Londe accepted eagerly. Judith seemed a little bored at the prospect.

"I shall have to go home and dress," she said. "However, I suppose——"

"Nine o'clock at the Hotel de Paris," Brookes interrupted. "I shall have a little surprise for you."

THE dinner was a banquet—wine, food, flowers, thanks to the genius of the *maître d'hôtel*, were all the most perfect of their sort. Brookes was an excellent host, almost handsome in his light-hearted gaiety, with a new colour in his cheeks, a freshness which made him seem years younger, a constant stream of conversation, a complete lack of background. Londe, immensely interested, was an appreciative guest. Judith, on the other hand, occasionally showed signs of a wandering attention. Several times she smiled across the room at a table where a young Frenchman, an acquaintance from the Club, was dining alone. Once Brookes intercepted her glance, and broke off in the middle of a sentence. The stem of the wineglass which he was holding snapped in his fingers, a look of black fury darkened his face. Londe watched him with the delighted interest of the scientific investigator. Judith laughed at him.

"He's such a dear," she murmured, "the Vicomte d'Aix. He's all alone, too. Why don't you ask him to have coffee with us?"

"I don't want to," Brookes answered, sullenly. "I don't like him."

Judith made a little grimace.

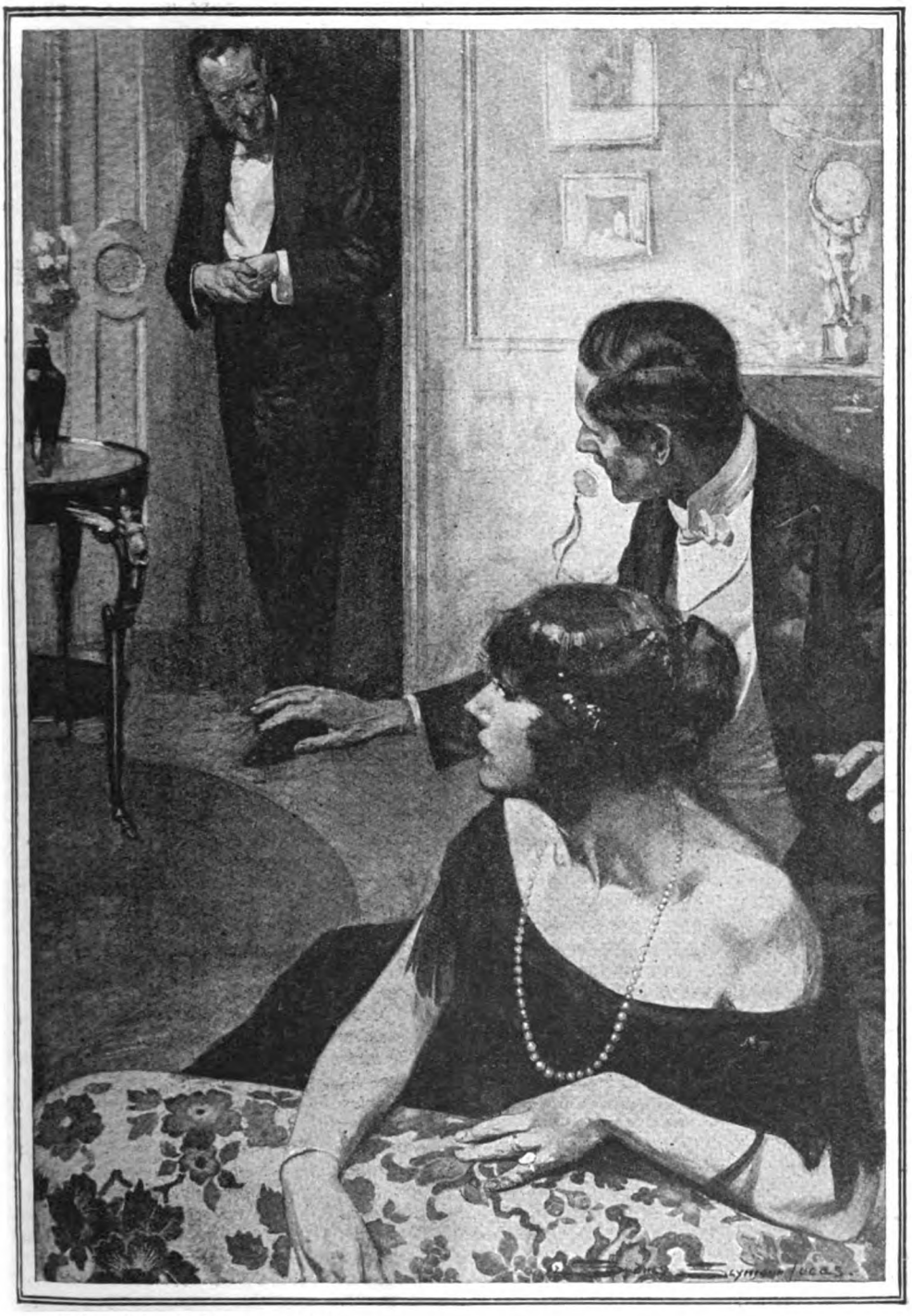
"Very well, then, let's go," she suggested, rising to her feet at the same moment as the Vicomte. "We'll have our coffee at the Club. You men needn't hurry unless you like. The Vicomte will take me."

Brookes seized the menu and tore it in half. Londe watched his distorted face with a pleased and understanding interest.

"A capricious person, my wife, I am afraid," he sighed. "She is scarcely sufficiently grateful for our delightful dinner. May I suggest that we try a glass of eighteen eighteen brandy? We can compare it with what I gave you last night."

"Damn last night, and you and your wife!" was the insolent reply.

Londe only laughed.



"One kiss, Judith, one kiss."

She leaned towards him, then suddenly drew back with a warning gesture. The door had opened noiselessly. Londe stood upon the threshold.

THE young man's opportunity was long in coming. He had won many thousands of francs and drunk many liqueur brandies before he found Judith temporarily alone. He drew her into the bar.

"I am not sure that I want to come in here again," she complained, a little peevishly. "I want to play."

"Presently," he said. "I have something for you."

She settled down with an air of resignation.

"Do you know that I have won six hundred thousand francs?" he confided.

She nodded.

"Well?"

He drew a small packet from his pocket, opened the grey morocco case, and the glitter of diamonds flashed out into the room. She leaned forward negligently and made a little grimace.

"Diamonds!" she exclaimed, disparagingly. "I hate them. Whatever made you spend your money on jewels set in such a ridiculous fashion?"

He shut up the case with a snap. His expression for a moment was almost terrible.

"I bought them for you," he declared, fiercely. "I won my money for you. I have become as you and your husband are for your sake."

She looked at him disdainfully.

"You're a fool!" she exclaimed. "You might have had a chance before. You have none now."

"What do you mean?" he gasped. "I did it for your sake."

"Idiot!" she scoffed.

"I only half believed what your husband told me," he went on, "but I know now that it's the truth. I feel the difference every moment. I have a mind without a background, a brain, feeling, passion—all without a soul. It was for you."

She laughed at him contemptuously.

"You should have known better," she told him. "Your only attraction to me was—that you were on the other side of the border. You were sane. Now you are just like us. You do not interest me. Run away, please, and take your diamonds. The Vicomte is coming and I want to talk to him."

Brookes rose to his feet and walked out of the place, hatless, and without a word to the servant whom he passed. He crossed the road, descended a little way, and climbed on to the parapet. For a moment he stood there, poised—a horrible sight. Then he dived downwards into space. . . .

Ann brought the newspaper containing the brief notice of the young man's suicide to Daniel one morning a few days later.

"I thought the concluding portion of this rather strange, Mr. Rocke," she said.

Daniel adjusted his spectacles and read. The paragraph was headed:—

"*UNUSUAL SUICIDE AT MONTE CARLO.*

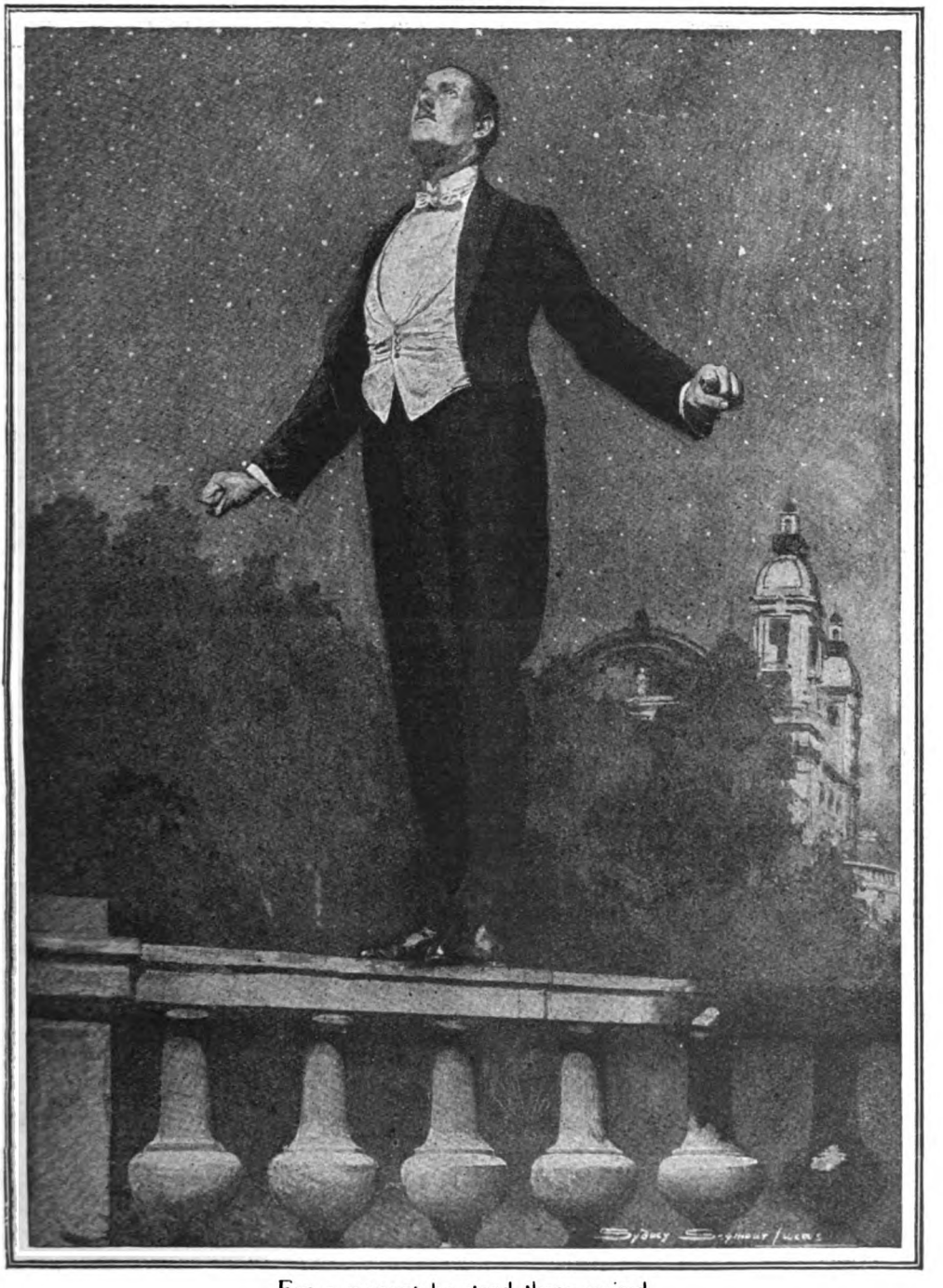
"*The body of a well-dressed young man, subsequently identified as Mr. Ernest Brookes, a tea-planter from Ceylon, was yesterday picked up on the quay at Monte Carlo. He appears to have jumped from the parapet above and broken his neck. Notes and plaques amounting to over half a million francs were discovered upon his person, besides some valuable jewels. His only acquaintances in Monte Carlo seem to have been a Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent, who had dined with him at the Hotel de Paris on the night in question. They, however, are unable to throw any light upon the mystery.*"

"It is curious, of course, but why should you think that it might interest us?" Daniel inquired.

She pointed to an additional paragraph, a little lower down. Daniel took up the paper again and read:—

"*From the evidence of the valet at the hotel where the deceased was staying, it appears that he had dined on the previous evening at the villa occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent, and that he was brought home late at night by his host, suffering apparently from intoxication. On the following morning, however, the young man was unusually w ll, but suffering from what appeared to be loss of memory. He was exceedingly cheerful during the day, but complained occasionally of dizziness. He appears to have confided to the valet, whilst dressing for dinner, that he had been made the victim of some sort of experiment, which was likely to affect his brain. A few minutes later he absolutely denied having made any such statement and continually contradicted himself. The valet, who was also the person who helped him to his rooms on the previous evening, declares that the deceased showed no signs of intoxication, but gave him the impression of having been drugged. No further light can be thrown upon the mystery at present, as it seems that Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent have unexpectedly left Monte Carlo.*"

"Very queer," Daniel murmured, his fingers straying towards the A B C.



For a moment he stood there, poised.

"'Broadbent' is a very common name."

"And easily assumed," Ann replied. "The train goes at two-thirty."

"Another wild-goose chase, I suppose," Daniel grumbled. "At any rate, we shall get a little sunshine."

(Another story in this series will appear next month.)

AS I KNOW THEM

Some Famous Authors of To-day

JOHN GALSWORTHY
ISRAEL ZANGWILL

By MRS C.A.DAWSON-SCOTT

ILLUSTRATED BY E. O. HOPPÉ.

JOHN GALSWORTHY.

WHEN I was a girl novel-reading was discouraged in Evangelical households. Even to-day old ladies say, "Sorry I do not know your novels, but I only go in for serious reading. I should not think it right to spend my time on what is, after all, only fiction," and I can remember standing with my hand on the gas-tap while I galloped through "Vanity Fair." If I heard a door open below, out went the light, and I was in bed and asleep. In some such furtive way I contrived to read "The Man of Property." I read it and looked eagerly for announcements of more books by the same author.

Mrs. Hueffer (Violet Hunt) draws a charming picture of the young Galsworthy sitting in the garden of the house next to hers and writing his first book, the wind snatching at the completed sheets and blowing them across to her. He is a man of great self-control, and I fancy must have learned it then, for it is difficult to imagine anything more irritating than to have your MS. dispersed by a playful wind. Nowadays, in the seclusion of his home at Hampstead, of his house on Dartmoor, he is safe from such interruptions—but I wonder whether he writes with the same morning ecstasy and absorption.

"The Man of Property" showed that we had a young novelist writing in the Thackeray tradition, one who was giving us, and the generations to come, a history of the period as seen from his social angle. A certain stratum had been carefully observed and the observations recorded. They had been recorded by a master-hand in a style remarkable for its limpid simplicity, a style that can stand comparison with that of Freeman, of Green. The last few pages of the book, however, are more than history and must live because of their inner preservative of fire.

It is impossible to doubt that, among his novels, the Forsyth Saga is John Galsworthy's representative book, yet the writer remains behind the words of it, as a wild creature behind the grass stems in a meadow. We feel he is recording scenes of an existence well known to him, an existence which was distasteful, perhaps, and, on that account, the more deeply realized; that, although he was part of it, he was so rebelliously. It was not until Mr. Galsworthy wrote "Fraternity" that you could feel in his work a rising tide of personality.

A will-o'-the-wisp flits through that book revealing, with blue lambent flame, the mind of the writer, a mind of unusual quality, shy, elusive, and obsessed by spiritual as well as physical beauty. "Fraternity" opened my eyes to the loveliness of the town on the outskirts of which I had been born. I had lived in London as if I had been blind. I had not seen how green it is, had not observed the

long street perspectives which end in misty silvers and crimsons. Nowadays, as the bus carries me along the grey street, I am on the look-out for the tree I shall be sure to see. Have you ever noticed that there is hardly a road in the whole of London which has not its break of leafage ?

I met Mr. Galsworthy through his cousin —also a writer—Miss Dorothy Easton. Not that she introduced us, but that, having met her, my roving mind settled for a moment on him and his contribution to literature, and when I found him in front of me at a meeting, his kind, handsome face, his square head, his air of attention to the matter in hand, made me think I should like to go and talk to him.

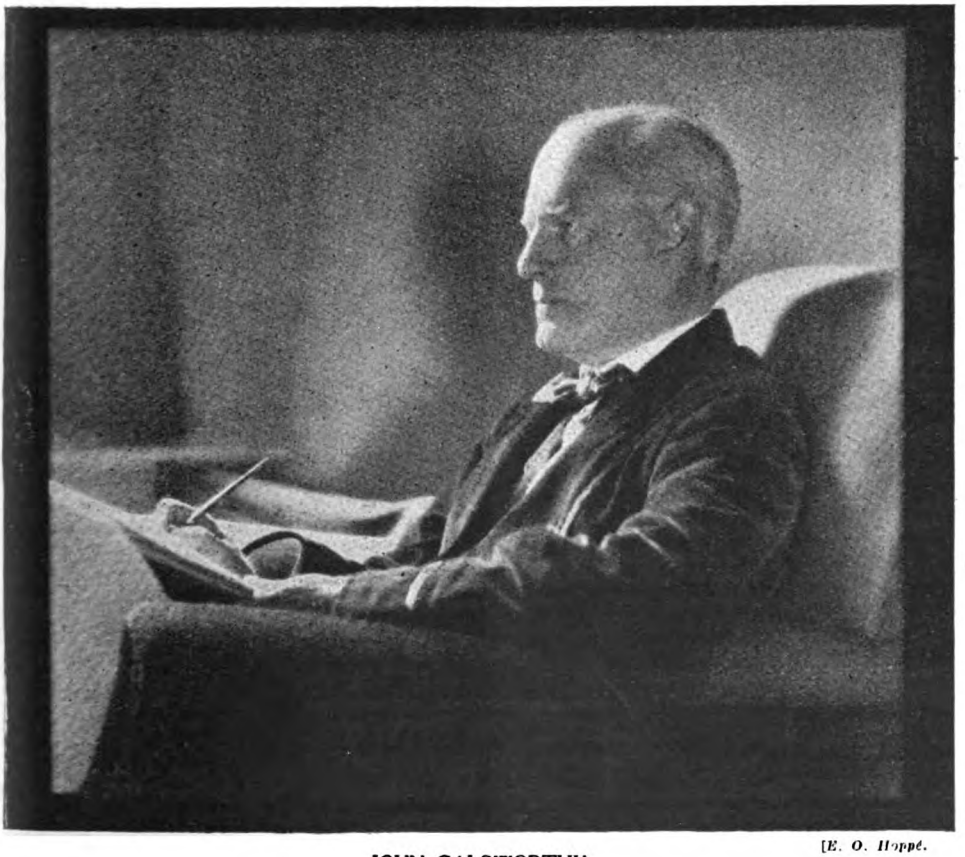
So I did.

Folks say that the bigger the man the less conventional, and, when you demur, add, " Well, at any rate the less full of himself."

These dicta came into my mind the other day when talking to H. G. Wells. In him I found a man reacting too quickly to the events of the moment; in fact, too busy to be self-conscious. Mr. Galsworthy's modesty is of another kind. Whereas Mr. Wells is self-forgetful, Mr. Galsworthy is actually humble of mind. He has opinions, he holds to them, but he is anxious to give everybody a hearing, to be just. Although his mind was formed by Harrow and Oxford, life with its rough hand has largely emancipated him from the narrowing tradition. Before his sensitive soul the world has spread a panorama of suffering, and consequently his plays—" Strife," " Justice," etc.—are so many exposures of the social order. " If only the average man could have his eyes opened to facts," he seems to say, " he, being in the main a good chap, would insist on laws being altered and conditions improved."

The mind of the Englishman moves slowly, but it moves. Dickens in his day made a considered outcry against the evils then obtaining, and many were swept away. Mr. Galsworthy's plays are having a similar effect.

He has given us a History of Our Own Times, he has suggested reforms which are



[E. O. Hoppé.

JOHN GALSWORTHY.

gradually being carried out, and he has done more than that. His mind, like that of most creative writers, is many-sided. He is not satisfied to be only artist, historian, reformer, traveller—he knows America, Europe, Northern Africa—dramatist, poet; he must put his hand to a plough, take action, do things.

Yet—and this is his idiosyncrasy—the things he does must be of spiritual importance, must have little to do with the material, the concrete. In this transitional age John Galsworthy thus proves himself to be a man who has faith in humanity.

During a quiet time on the Cornish moors, it occurred to me that the world was kept in touch by its writers. We learn about other nations from books and papers and magazines, and the more we know about them, the more obvious does it become that humanity is not so much different as alike. If, therefore, an international club for writers could be formed, I felt it must help towards understanding and fellowship.

Do you know what happens when you write to people about a new idea? The ordinary busy individual reads a line or two, then, if you happen to be a friend, picks up his fountain-pen and, cursing inwardly at the waste of his valuable time, begins: "Dear Dash, I belong to so many clubs. No, really, not another." If he does not know you, your letter goes into the waste-paper basket.

Mr. Galsworthy's attitude towards ideas is more vital. Whatever is brought to his notice he considers. It is amazing, considering the quantity of work he does, that he should find the time, for there are after all only a certain number of hours in the day. No doubt it is a help that, although he is on the telephone, his name is not in the directory. Also there is Mrs. Galsworthy.

I rather wish this were an article on Mrs. Galsworthy. I should like to talk of her kindness of heart, of the way in which, without their knowing it—perfection of kindness, that—she puts the shy at their ease and gives the lonely companionship. She, also, is a writer, and has done some excellent translations from the French; but I think, in fact I know, that she lifts a good deal of the burden of his conscientious attention to detail from her husband's shoulders.

WHEN I wrote asking whether he thought it would be possible to found an International Club of Poets, Playwrights (P), Essayists, Editors (E), Novelists (N), which should have centres in every country, I got an immediate reply. The suggestion embodied an ideal in which Mr. Galsworthy was interested and he would be willing to help.

Although I knew that we were lucky to get him to take an interest in the fortunes of the P.E.N., I had no idea what a remarkable chairman he would make. I was, however, gradually to discover that behind his creative powers lay a faculty for business which would have made him a success in the City. Instinctively he lays broad and deep foundations. Without training in these matters he yet knows subconsciously where strains will come and difficulties arise, and he makes ready for them. At the same time useful developments occur to that sensitive, groping mind, and having made sure of his foundations he proceeds to build. Whereas in his earlier work he pointed out what needed to be done, now he works towards the desired end.

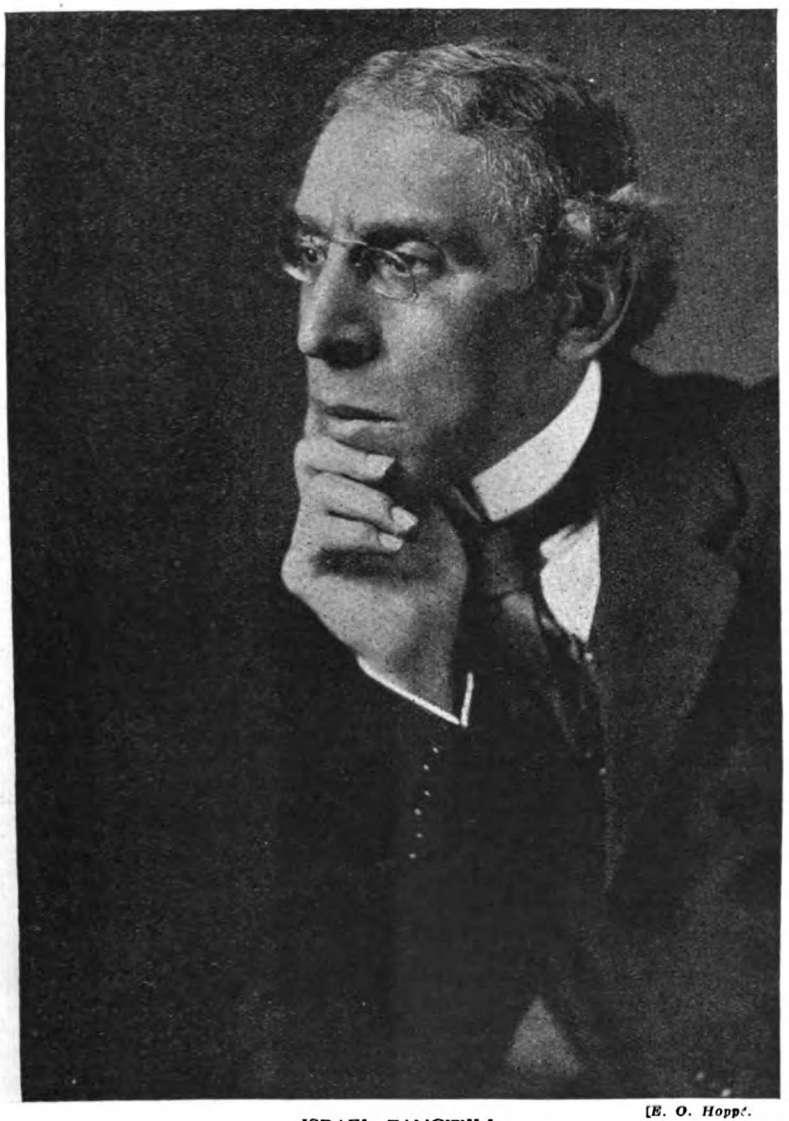
His is the international outlook. He would have friendship between man and man all the world over. He is doing what he—a strong, wise personality—can to ensure it.

Mr. Galsworthy's knowledge of other than English writers appears to me phenomenal. Having with difficulty acquired some unusual bit of information—say about Liang Chih Chao—you let it slip into the talk. You find, however, that he knew it long since. He has gone about the world meeting its greatest sons, he has seen them "as trees walking." His international outlook is based, therefore, on the soundest of all foundations, *i.e.*, knowledge.

I have said nothing of his personal magnetism. If he thinks something ought to be done, he goes blithely forward, believing it will. Other people are caught up by that optimism like boats by an Atlantic roller. They let themselves be carried forward on its tide, and before they realize it the impossible has become an accomplished fact. We are at a stage of the world's history when such optimism is extremely valuable. John Galsworthy, because of it, is a power for good

ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

A TWISTY Sussex lane, shadowed by trees and bordered by wide fields of corn, runs by a modest green door set well in the hedge, and comes eventually to a break in wind-blown tamarisk. A sharp drop, and below is a tumbling blue-grey sea. The green door, so cool-looking, so almost hidden, lets you into Israel



[E. O. Hoppé.

ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

Zangwill's home, the home he has made for himself and his family by his stories and his plays. It hangs, with its lawns and meadows, on the very verge of space and is appropriately called Far End. It is as if he whose forbears were wanderers, who himself has wandered until the globe has become for him as a garden, the plots of which are set with familiar plants, can only be content to be on the edge of this sea-bound island. When he comes to London every hour is mapped out. He moves quickly hither and thither, but always with his wings spread to return, and you imagine that England has not got him "for keeps"; that at any moment he may take some wider flight.

While making these little studies of writers, I have become impressed with their versatility. Of course, I knew my friends were delightful people, with a sense of beauty and an ability to give it forth in creative work; but I had not done full justice to their many-sidedness, their willingness to embark for some art reason on laborious, self-sacrificing toil, and their intense sincerity. Each in turn has proved "a wonder and a wild delight," and I stand amazed at the magnificent efforts of which they have been proved capable. "To get a single detail

correct, I count a week's work not wasted," Zangwill said. "It took me a year to grasp that branch of mathematics," said Colonel Lynch, pointing to a paragraph in his book, "The Principles of Psychology." "After the long hours of my daily work," said H. G. Wells, speaking of the time he was bound apprentice, "I spent every leisure moment studying and was thus enabled to take my degree."

The life of a writer is, in fact, a lesson in the results obtainable by concentrated toil. The more you know about these men, the greater must become your faith in the future of humanity. If mankind is occasionally so gifted, is capable of such exertion, surely we are within view of the super-man. Israel Zangwill has lately translated the poems of a Spanish Jew, poems which were written in the eleventh century. I said casually, "How many languages do you speak?"

"Speak?" he answered, thoughtfully. "Do you mean how many am I able to translate or read?"

Apparently he was able to speak about a dozen. Imagine it! However, I suppose that, once you have learnt a few key-languages such as Arabic and Sanskrit and Russian, the others come easy.

THOUGH Zangwill was born in London, though he speaks English in a low, cultured voice, his grasp of world-politics makes him, in a very wide sense, cosmopolitan. Belonging to a race which is scattered over the globe, he is at home in every land; but his people come from Russia, his characteristic name is Russian, and he still feels a deep interest in that country. I feel glad he has a son, Israel Ayrton Zangwill, to carry on his name. The Ayrton came from his wife, who was one of the two daughters of Professor Ayrton—the other is Mrs. Gerald Gould—and is herself a novelist. One of her books, that most amusing "First Mrs. Mollivar," an excellent study of a Victorian woman, is dedicated "To Israel, in the loving hope that he may bring the ideals for which we both care a little nearer—the ideals which form the bond that unites us." Although the ideals may have brought these two together, other things, things very much alive, unite them now. Looking at the pleasure houses of their children, the mimic theatre in which their young daughter rehearses Ophelia, smoothing Timmie, the white mouse with ruby eyes that little Oliver shows you, your thoughts go back to the Russia from which Zangwill's parents escaped, the Russia in which Jews are still suffering.

My sense of the brotherhood of humanity, of the necessity for a widening of fellowship between nations and races, has been stimulated by the cosmopolitanism of the Jews. I saw a people which had melted into and become part of other people, yet had retained its individuality, and I felt that such a state of affairs must make for peace. Sitting in Mr. Zangwill's many-windowed study, by the table on which lay his scarlet pen and his foolscap pages of tiny writing (part of a new comedy), I said so; but found he was not in agreement with me.

He knew, as I did not, how greatly his people had suffered during their social experiment. To his ear had lately come a story of murders in the Ukraine. Sacks had been sent to people which, when opened, proved to contain the heads of their children. The thought of such happenings is unbearable; and it is no wonder that Zangwill—looking at his own safe and cherished youngsters—has been willing to give many years of the most creative period of his life to working for Jewish integration. In his "Tragedies of the Ghetto" is the story ("Noah's Ark") of an American Jew who sought to gather his scattered folk into a whole before the time was ripe. I wonder whether the time will ever be ripe?

One result of Zangwill's study of world-politics was a series of political plays. In "The War-God," which was played several years before the war, and should have warned us of what was coming, was a sketch of the Kaiser which is worth recalling:—

"Why squat here spinning crafty labyrinths,
Jetting your filthy network o'er the globe?
You think to bind the future? Poor grey spinner!
Fate, the blind housewife, with her busy broom
Shall shrivel at one sweep your giant web
And leave a little naked scuttling spider."

Wretched spider, hiding under a Dutch leaf, to escape the wrath of Europe and that dark menace of Russia, which may crush him with the rest of us, for "Agree with thine enemy quickly while thou art in the way with him" is a warning spoken long ago but still applicable. According to Mr. Zangwill, America is the Melting-Pot, Europe the Cockpit, and any State which, in advance of a people's psychology, tries to force on them a social system, a Forcing-House. Nor is he only a politician, but, like us all, has his views on art.

He cannot but perceive that the managers of our theatres appear to be unable to gauge the public taste, with the result that they have had a long succession of failures; and he thinks that the playwright would improve his chances of being heard by publishing his dramas. In that way they would

become known to the public, which, if they were on broad universal themes, were palpitating with a large sense of life, would presently ask to see them played. I like the serene confidence of that idea, and am interested in the volumes that Zangwill himself has published.

With one or two of his plays he has—though on the whole a successful dramatist—had curious streaks of ill-luck. An adaptation of "Children of the Ghetto" was put on at the Adelphi during that particular week in the Boer War when the British arms met with three defeats; while "Too Much Money," which had been playing to full houses in Scotland, came to London at the time of the defeat (in the Great War) of the Fifth Army.

"If this goes on," said Mrs. Zangwill, softly, "he will be nicknamed Jonah and begged not to write, lest a national misfortune take place every time a play of his is produced."

However, his luck is generally good. "Merely Mary Ann," which he wrote in a fortnight while suffering from neuralgia by day and insomnia by night, has proved most lucrative; while in America "The Melting-Pot" has become a stock play. I hope the new comedy may be another "Mary Ann."

I SEEM to have been talking round Mr. Zangwill without exactly speaking of the man I know. Dramatist, novelist, reformer, man of wide experience and many gifts, he has done every kind of literary work except the epic poem—but he remains a mischievous boy. How he must have enjoyed making Hamlin Garland—who had never worn evening dress and imagined then that to do so was a sign of softness and effeminacy—get himself into proper rig for a big London dinner! "It is the most democratic dress in the world, for, once it is on, you are the equal of a duke," said Zangwill, and the man from the Middle West could only agree. "With most unholy glee," says he, "Zangwill stood looking on while I was measured."

"Unholy glee" is the right word for his expression, and well do I know it.

I believe the first time I saw him was at a meeting. I thought I was making myself useful, but was probably only being officious. Presently a stooped man with glancing dark eyes and a bush of attractive curls came up to me and said, "You seem to be doing things. Will you get that window shut for me?"

After that he was not only kind to my novels but to my projects, and eventually came to see me. I remember feeling very shy of the gentleman in the light suit, with the dark skin and long face and curious jaw, so sent hurriedly across the road for a young Jewish friend to support me. It was then that my guest informed me that—also across the road—Moscovitch was living. "A man who is playing Yiddish dramas in the East-end of London, but who before long will come West to delight you all."

Mr. Zangwill does not seem able to believe in my shyness, because when I want him to be of any use I forget about it. He even complains that when he says "No, no!" to anything that I want, I maintain that two negatives make an affirmative. He also—and this was really shocking of him—called me little tree-cat names at the May Festival of the P.E.N. Club in the hearing of the assembled delegates from other lands. Yes, I am afraid that this great Israel Zangwill, of whom I have been discoursing so seriously, is in private life a schoolboy who has never grown up; that he is, in fact—an impident feller!

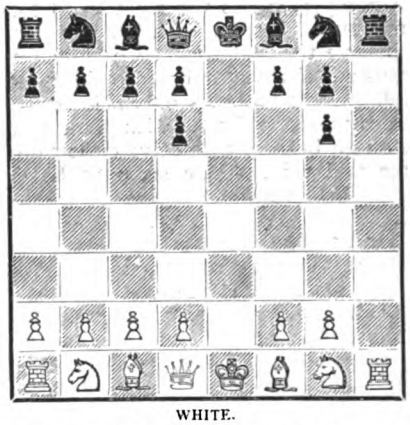
PERPLEXITIES.

By HENRY E. DUDENEY.

675.—CHESS POSSIBILITY.

IT is a convention among chess problemists that every position must be one that might possibly arise in the game. It does not matter how improbable or ridiculous the moves, so long as it is possible to arrive

BLACK.



WHITE.

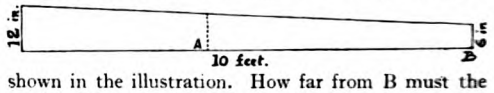
at the position by legitimate play. If the novice saw the position given in our diagram he would probably say that it is utterly impossible and could not come about in a game. How could Black have captured with his King's pawn White's king's pawn on the queen's file? Similarly, how could he have captured the rook's pawn? Yet the position is possible, and when you have got the idea of the thing, it will be found a fascinating puzzle to try to arrive at the position in the fewest possible moves by constructing an imaginary game. The fewest moves are, I think, seventeen on each side, but it requires cunning to find them. This puzzle caused curious interest at the recent Southsea Chess Congress. It was solved by Alekhin and by Sir George Thomas, the latter finding a slight variation from my own method.

676.—A LEGACY PUZZLE.

A MAN left legacies to his three sons and to a hospital, amounting in all to £1,320. If he had left the hospital legacy also to his first son, that son would have received as much as the other two sons together. If he had left it to his second son, he would have received twice as much as the other two sons together. If he had left the hospital legacy to his third son, he would have received then thrice as much as the first and second son together. Find the amount of each legacy.

677.—DIVIDING THE BOARD.

A MAN had a board measuring 10ft. in length, 6in. wide at one end and 12in. wide at the other, as



shown in the illustration. How far from B must the straight cut at A be made in order to divide it into two equal pieces?

678.—A CHARADE.

MY *first* leaves no record to tell of its lot
But this simple fact, that it was and is not.
Cold and hard is my *second*, till touched by a flame,
The result of which is that it changes its name.
Many shrink from my *whole*, others labour to gain it,
And merit it least when they pant to obtain it.

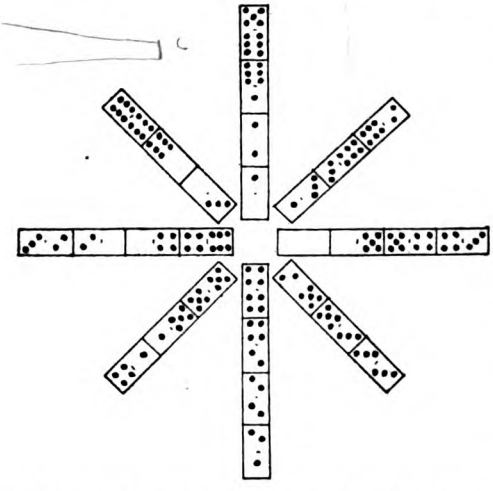
679.—A QUEER DIVISION.

CAN you divide thirteen into two equal numbers without a fraction?

SOLUTIONS TO LAST MONTH'S PUZZLES.

670.—A DOMINO STAR.

THE illustration shows a correct solution. The dominoes are placed together according to the ordinary



rule, the pips in every ray sum to 21, and the central numbers are 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and two blanks.

671.—CROSSING THE FERRY.

THE puzzle can be solved in as few as nine crossings, as follows: (1) Mr. and Mrs. Webster cross. (2) Mrs. Webster returns. (3) Mother and Daughter-in-law cross. (4) Mr. Webster returns. (5) Father-in-law and Son cross. (6) Daughter-in-law returns. (7) Mr. Webster and Daughter-in-law cross. (8) Mr. Webster returns. (9) Mr. and Mrs. Webster cross.

672.—AN OLD ENIGMA.

THE word is ON-I-ON.

673.—THREE NINES.

A GREAT many people give 9^{9} as the answer. To find the number that this expresses we, of course, multiply nine nines together and get 387420489, and then 387420489 nines multiplied together will give us the answer. But this is beaten by $\lfloor\!\lfloor 9 \rfloor\!\rfloor$

Factorial 9 is $1\times2\times3\times4\times5\times6\times7\times8\times9=362880$. Therefore, we should have to find the 362880th power of 362880, and the result would be the power to which we must raise 362880. This is a tremendous task that it would be vain to attempt.

674.—A CHARADE.

THE word is FOOT-STOOL.

THE HUMAN LEOPARDS

by

L. J. BEESTON

ILLUSTRATED BY CHARLES CROMBIE

THE tall, lean man at the upper end of the long table, he whose dress-shirt kept edging out from his waistcoat, and whose red beard glowed like a flame, got up and said :—

" I propose that we call on our friend, the inspector, to tell us the story of what happened."

At these words the thirty-and-three diners up and down the table, in this private room of the Hotel Resplendent, made movements and sounds of satisfaction. There were cries of " Hopp ! Hopp ! Inspector Hopp ! "

The corpulent gentleman who was leaning back in his chair, with his fingers on the edge of the table, and the expression of the well-satisfied diner relaxing his features, smiled benignantly and said :—

" Very well, gentlemen, since you insist, I will tell you all about it." He took a preliminary sip of his brandy liqueur, and went straight forward as follows :—

" IN accord with my instructions from headquarters, I went down to Chelwood End on the Wednesday of last week. I did not take the car, but the half-past eight train from Baker Street. I chose that way because it was snowing heavily, and I distrusted the state of the roads.

" No one got out at Chelwood End but myself. I went under the railway bridge, climbed a stile on the left, crossed a field, and so into that wood of beeches which has given Chelwood its trifle of reputation. They rise up to right and left of the path, which is therefore in a little valley. Their sinewy arms, which have the naked-limbed, wrestling appearance of beeches, sagged under the snow upon them, hung without a movement, covered with the delicate white blossom which was descending out of the night.

" The woodland path finishes where a road runs both ways, and just across this road, commanding a view of the avenue, is the house which was my destination. It stands alone—a small place of greyish brick, cheap and ugly, with a wood fence surmounted by twisted iron nails.

" As I approached the house I saw a very tall woman with piercing black eyes. She said ' Good evening.' I answered her with the same words, and she vanished, using a peculiar gait, which was more a glide than a walk.

" The little hall was dark. As the sound of my knock rang out, a voice on the other side of the door screamed ' Go away ! Go away ! ' Then came the drawing of a bolt, the letting-down of a chain, and the appearance of a man in a blue dressing-gown with red facings. He carried a small oil lamp, badly-trimmed, and the smoky flare showed me a pale face with untidy hair.

" ' What do you want ? ' he demanded, querulously.

" ' Are you Mr. Fraser Elgood ? ' I made answer. ' I am Detective-Inspector Hopp, of police headquarters. Your communication was received.'

"He looked rather scared. 'Oh, yes,' said he. 'Come in. I did not expect anyone until the morning, and was just retiring. This way, please.'

"As I followed him, the same screeching voice let out again: 'Get out of here! Get out of here!' It was a grey parrot in a cage against the wall, and he whetted his beak as if he wanted to rip me up.

"We went into a little room leading from the hall, and he put the lamp upon a table.

"'I'll light the gas fire,' he said. 'It's rather cold in here, inspector.'

"It was ice cold, and his teeth chattered as he spoke. It was obvious that he was suffering from nerves. He fumbled at lighting the stove, and when the flame appeared, only to vanish with a bang, he shouted, 'Oh, damn the thing!'

"'Do not trouble,' I begged. 'Before this room is warm I shall have gone.'

"'Doesn't it matter?' he replied, irritably. 'All right, but, if you'll excuse me, I'll go and put on some more clothes; I am only partly dressed, and this frost goes to my bones.'

"LEFT alone for a little while, I took up the oil lamp and examined the room. I saw at once that although it had not been built as a bedroom, yet it had been used for that purpose. True, there was no bed there, only a Chesterfield against a wall; but in a corner recess was a small chest of drawers with a bedroom swivel mirror upon it, and a round little wash-stand on castors in another corner. The window was shrouded with a pair of heavy claret-coloured curtains. I tried to look out, but the night pressed up against the panes, and all I could see was a vague veil of the falling snowflakes. Mr. Fraser Elgood was a good twenty minutes gone. When he returned he had not only dressed himself completely, but he had fought the cold in another way, as a quite obvious odour of whisky told me.

"He felt better, and spoke up at once in a business-like fashion.

"'I am very pleased indeed to see you, inspector,' he assured me, drawing a chair up to the table where I was sitting. 'I assume that you are acquainted, through my communication to the police, with the not very desirable situation in which I find myself?'

"'Yes; but you can briefly recapitulate the particulars.'

"'I inherited this little property, and three thousand pounds besides, from a relative who willed it to me,' Elgood began. 'He was my half-brother Edmund. He lived here a lonely life, attending to his own direct needs, and here he died alone. Four months ago he was missed, and when an anxious neighbour effected an entrance he found Edmund dead on the floor of the kitchen. He had had a fit, and in falling had struck his head against a table.'

"He stopped, his features set in a queer, listening attitude.

"'Was there any suggestion of foul play?' I demanded.

"He pulled himself together. 'The verdict was death from natural causes.'

"'And you were satisfied with that verdict?'

"'I? Oh, I was abroad at the time. I had lived for years in the States—— Hark! Do you hear that husky whistling? It's that cursed parrot. It belonged to Edmund, and one day I'll wring——'

"'You were in America when your half-brother died?' I interrupted. 'You received a letter from a lawyer, I suppose?'

"'No,' he answered. 'I had for long been out of touch with him. There was an advertisement in the papers, requesting me, if alive, to communicate with a firm of solicitors, and I saw it. I came to England at once, to this place, where I have since lived.'

"'Alone?'

"'Yes.'

"'I understand that you are not liked, Mr. Elgood?'

"'That is just it,' said he, with smothered anger. 'I am shunned, pointed at, made the subject of unpleasant whispers.'

"'Because you choose to live an isolated existence?'

"He indulged in a minute of sullen silence, then he replied: 'I have an idea—I feel—I *know* that my name and Edmund's death are coupled together.'

"'But that is absurd, seeing that you were thousands of miles away at the time? Surely, Mr. Elgood, you have not sought this interview in order to lodge such a complaint? Mere tittle-tattle——'

"'Curse them all!' he snapped. The spirit he had drunk was now burning discs of crimson in his cheeks.

"'Come, there is something else,' I urged.

"He looked round uneasily, seemed about to speak, drew his chair a little closer to mine, and suddenly demanded—'Tell me, inspector, have you ever heard of the Human Leopards?'

"The startling question, accompanied as it was by the fear that flared up in his eyes, might be called a dramatic thrill.

"'Certainly I have heard of them,' I assured him, soothingly. 'The police of the most obscure country know a little about them. It is a peculiarly grim title taken by one of the secret fraternities of the world.'

I was interrupted by a parrot's long, low, chuckling gurgle of laughter. Elgood sprang up, his galled nerves quivering. "I'll kill that confounded thing!" he cried.

"He looked relieved. 'I am glad I have not to explain,' said he. 'You are acquainted with their methods?'

"'Partly. They are a body of idealists, I believe. They acknowledge all laws that are just, but they assert the undeniable fact that there are more scoundrels who manage to keep on the right side of the law than the number who over-step the line. And it is upon the former section that they focus their spotlight—or, rather, their concentrated disc of fire which kills when it touches. Of course, I am speaking figuratively. In plain language, they attend to the rogue, the villain, who smiles at the law, or to the secret criminal who hides from it. Him they kill—ruthlessly exterminate.'

"'They track him down—those leopards!' said Elgood, in a hoarse whisper. 'They seem to scent him like the wild beasts that they are! Are you acquainted with their distinguishing mark, inspector?'

"'Perfectly,' I answered, turning back my left sleeve. 'Just here, on the under side of the arm, between the wrist and elbow, they tattoo, roughly, the semblance of a leopard. Where you see that mark, there is one of them; where it is not—well, there is not one of them. Now, why this questioning, Mr. Elgood? Have you an idea that your half-brother was killed by that strange society?'

"He looked at me queerly. 'Who knows?' he replied.

"'Or is it possible that you yourself——'

"I was interrupted by a long, low, chuckling gurgle of laughter.

"He sprang up, his galled nerves quivering.

'I'll kill that confounded thing!' he cried. He rushed out, unhooked the cage from the wall, and I heard him fling it, parrot and all, into some corner. He returned instantly, looking rather ashamed of his want of control.

"'Mr. Elgood, do you know in which room your half-brother Edmund used to sleep?' I questioned, abruptly.

"He showed surprise as he answered—'In one of the two back rooms upstairs.'

"'And you said that he was quite alone in this house?"

"'Yes, I did say so,' he answered, with a touch of hostility.

"'Oh, I am not doubting you,' I responded, deprecatingly. 'But may I inquire who, if anyone, has occupied his room since?'

"'I have.'

"'Then this room in which we are seated was not used as a sleeping chamber?'

"'No. Why do you ask?'

"'There are one or two pieces of furniture which would seem to justify my question?'

"'They have been put here out of the way, that is all.'

"'I am surprised to hear that,' I assured him. 'When you left me here on my arrival, I ventured on certain investigations, and they persuaded me that this room has been occupied as a bedroom, and for a considerable period.'

"'You are mistaken, inspector,' he said, firmly.

"'I do not think so,' I maintained.

"'May I ask for your evidences?'

"'I am convinced that a man has for long slept in this apartment,' I began. 'I should say he was between thirty-five and forty years of age; about five feet eight in height, partly bald, such hair as he has being of a reddish-brown colour.'

"'All that is guess-work,' he mocked. 'What proofs have you?'

"'Oh, I estimate his approximate height from the angle of that dressing-mirror on the chest of drawers in the recess. The swivelled glass is adjusted to the stature of a man of about the inches I have mentioned. The colour of his hair is no mystery, for I found a single hair by the glass. It is of a red-brown. It does not take much discrimination to tell a healthy human hair from an unhealthy. The hair I found is thin and brittle; therefore I assume that the man is partly bald. His age, I admit, makes rather a hazardous conjecture. I ventured an estimate because of the unframed photograph of that woman on the mantelpiece. She is a woman of about thirty-five or so, and the man, being engaged to her, might not be so very much older, or younger.'

"'But who said that he—if he exists—is engaged to the original of that photograph?' he demanded.

"'My dear sir,' I assured him, 'you will perceive more than one thumb mark on both sides of the picture—the thumb mark, by the way, of a man with unusually small hands; it means that he frequently took up the portrait, and that he often pressed his lips to the lips of the likeness. The trifling moisture has left a perceptible stain there. You will allow that that certainly argues a state of love, and, probably, an engagement.'

"'You do not lack imagination, inspector, said Elgood, with rather a sneer. 'Anything else?'

"'Yes. He wore a tweed, unlined cap. Then he was a cigarette smoker, and smoked more than was good for him; also he was rather near-sighted, and required the use of spectacles—not folders, but for help in reading only.'

"He looked at me with a little smile playing nervously round his lips. 'It is beyond me, inspector,' he answered. 'The unlined cap, for instance?'

"'Easy. He used to hang it on that nail this side of the door. The nail took a shred out; it is there still.'

"'And the cigarettes?'

"'The stiff wrappers of the packets he stuffed round the window frames to keep them from rattling on windy nights. The fact that he found it necessary showed that his nerves were weak—he smoked too many.'

"'How amazingly smart you are, inspector!'

"'Not at all.'

"'And the short-sight, with the spectacles for reading only?'

"'Just under the dressing-glass is a bent fragment of wire. It is precisely the piece of wire often used to repair that curve of spectacles that go round the ear. If he *always* wore spectacles it is not likely that he would have put up with such a somewhat unsightly makeshift.'

"'You excel yourself, inspector. But what about the bed?'

"'He made use of that Chesterfield. Look at its covering of Utrecht velvet—how worn it is along its length.'

"'Well, have you exhausted the list of your investigations and deductions?'

"'If I had more time I might add to them, but I have pursued the matter far enough to enable me to form a very important conclusion.'

"'And that conclusion, inspector, is——'

"'That Mr. Fraser Elgood was the subject of my theory.'

"'Myself?' he said, quite coolly.

" ' Yourself.'

" He drew a deep breath. ' I admit it,' said he. ' I slept here, in this room; throughout the last year of Edmund's life. His hidden guest. I am glad you found out. I wanted to tell you, but could not bring myself to it.' "

Here the narrator paused, with a genial smile which embraced his entire audience, and he sipped his brandy liqueur.

" Capital, Hopp, capital ! " commented the tall, lean man at the head of the long table. With one hand he stroked his red beard, which glowed like a flame, and with the other he pushed in one side of his refractory shirt-front.

" You got Elgood right into a corner, inspector," praised another.

" Devilish well worked out," exclaimed a third.

" See the man with the brains ! " cried a fourth.

THE narrator's smile deepened, broadened, radiated satisfaction. He put down his glass, cleared his throat, and continued :—

" I *do* hand myself a little bouquet," he beamed. " Well, gentlemen, when Elgood had made his admission I waited for his explanation. It seemed satisfactory, though peculiar.

" ' I came to my half-brother Edmund's house a fugitive,' said Elgood, with an appearance of frankness. ' I entered it by stealth, secretly, one night as black as this, with many a look behind to see if death snatched at my heels. For your assumption was correct, inspector : I had been marked down by those terrors which call themselves the Human Leopards. To escape them I had crossed from one continent to another, but I could not be sure that I had eluded them. No one who comes under the ban of those fiends ever is sure of a day of life. I fled to Edmund, told him my story, and he gave me shelter. I was convinced that if I had a chance at all I ought not to risk it by showing myself. Edmund agreed. He gave me this room. The curtains were never drawn from the windows. My presence in his house was a secret between us two. No other knew of it. I never went out except on dark nights, and kept to solitary paths. I spent a whole year in this stealthy fashion. At the end of that time I was certain that I had not been followed to England ; that I was lost sight of, given up, abandoned.

" ' And then, one morning, I found Edmund lying dead—in the kitchen, where he had tumbled down in a fit. I was doubly horrified ; his end shocked me, and I saw at once that I was in a great dilemma. Should I run out of the house, call a doctor, announce my presence, then I was doomed. The facts of my secret arrival, and my long unknown stay, must come to light, and, in the tragic circumstances, would cause a sensation. A sensation, as you will understand, was the one thing I had to avoid, for the publicity would bring upon me the attention of my dreaded enemies.

" ' I chose the only course open to me, inspector. I left the house, under cover of dark, as secretly as I had entered it. As no one knew I was there, leaving was easy work ; and a few days later I crossed to America. By that time I had ceased to fear my enemies. I watched the English papers, saw myself soon advertised for—for my half-brother had left me all his property, as I knew—and returned openly. Of course, the one or two advertisements for me were in themselves a mild form of sensation ; but I could not avoid that, neither was I disposed to leave this property unclaimed. However, I feel safe enough—except in one particular, and that has nothing to do with my former peril.

" ' I told you that, during my long stay here—a stay which your astuteness has revealed to you—I went out only at night, avoiding people. I was successful save on one occasion. A woman once accidentally stumbled against me in a miry path ; my hat was knocked off by the collision, and, there being a certain amount of moonlight behind the clouds, she saw my face. It did not seem to matter much ; she is a resident in the village, and the incident was very brief, and the light very uncertain. Well, soon after my open return here, I met this woman a second time. I passed her with barely a glance, but you know one can always tell when one is being looked after. Since then I have seen her on one or two other occasions. In her eyes there is suspicion, hostility.'

" ' That is understandable, Mr. Elgood,' I answered. ' If she has an idea that you were here, in a strangely secret manner, before your brother died, she probably wonders if there is any connection between you and the sudden death which gave you the property. I suppose she has been talking ? '

" ' I fear she has. She has breathed her vague suspicions into the air. I see doubtful faces wherever I go ; things are being whispered about me, inspector. Unless something is done, the state of affairs will become intolerable. I may be made the subject of blackmail.'

" ' Very true.'

" ' So you see why I communicated with you. My position is intensely awkward.

How can I come into the open with those devils the Human Leopards possibly somewhere in the background? What do you advise me to do, inspector?'

"All his first nervousness had returned; he regarded me with a pale face and haggard eyes.

"'What is this woman like?' I questioned.

"'She is exceptionally tall, with a brown complexion and piercing dark eyes; her gait is peculiar, being more a glide than a walk.'

"'You describe an unusual sort of woman,' I answered. 'Has it occurred to you that she perhaps has a purpose somewhat deeper than linking you with Edmund's death?'

"He looked at me open-mouthed. 'Ah!' he muttered. 'I never thought of that. You infer that she may be one of my enemies, inspector?'

"'How can I tell? The fraternity calling themselves the Human Leopards—— Ah!'

"The parrot's wild screech—'Go away! Go away!' had interrupted me.

"'There is someone outside the house?' I questioned.

"He rose with an effort. 'We will see; stand by me, inspector,' he asked.

"WE went into the little hall on the tips of our toes. The parrot, which was lying in a corner, let out a scream of laughter. Elgood prepared to open the door, looking round to see if I was by him.

"'Now!' I cried.

"Swift as light he flung the door back. We peered forward. In the black wall of the night I seemed vaguely to catch sight of a face, but, if it was there at all, it vanished instantly. I took a swift step, but Elgood gripped me by the arm, and his clutch was like that of a vice.

"'For God's sake do not leave me!' he panted.

"He was very horribly afraid.

"The cold of the windless air was intense. The endless files of the snowflakes fell, with not a whisper of sound for all their myriads.

"Elgood drew me back and closed the door. 'Come into the room,' he begged. 'I don't like your hint, inspector, about that woman being one—one of *those*. If I thought that——' He broke off, shivering, and we re-entered the room. 'I didn't see anyone outside,' he continued. 'Did you?'

"'I am not sure.'

"'That cursed parrot must have heard someone, though,' he added. 'You see what a position I am in, inspector. What ought I to do?'

"'Yes,' I agreed, 'you have got yourself into a very queer situation. If you would extricate yourself, you will want more nerve than you are showing.'

"The oil in the lamp was becoming exhausted; with an uncertain hand he turned up the wick, which spluttered angrily.

"'You are, it seems to me, between two fires,' I went on. 'There is the unpleasant gossip of the neighbourhood about your brother's death, and there is this very serious matter of your sworn enemies. I am inclined to think that you acted imprudently in returning to this country, but that is a useless regret. Now—this furtive, guessed-at whispering about Edmund's tragic end: you have admitted that you were in the house when it happened; more, that you have benefited considerably by it.'

"He made a movement as if to rise from his chair. 'What!' he exclaimed, angrily, 'do you also insinuate that I killed him?'

"'Keep yourself unagitated,' I urged. 'You have not denied it, remember.'

"'Well, I do deny it, here and now, once and for ever!' he half-stormed, leaning forward and hitting the table a blow with his clenched fist. 'What! Should I have got into touch with the police if I had killed Edmund? I brush that silly tittle-tattle aside.'

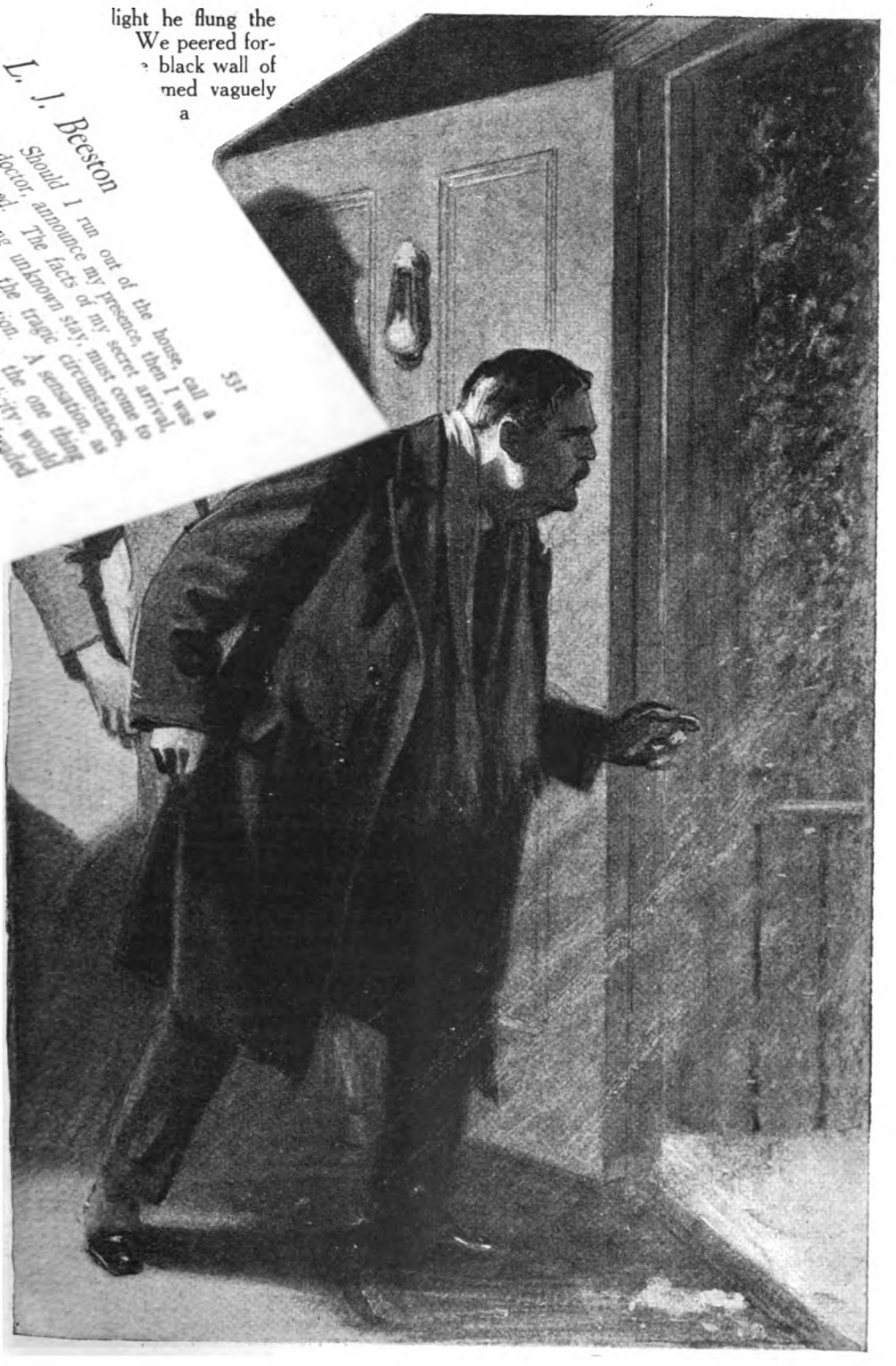
"'Nevertheless, I think it will pursue you, as you have complained,' I made answer; 'and—you must excuse me for saying this—your admission that you are marked down by the fraternity called the Human Leopards in no way helps to clear you of any charge. As you know, as I know, that ruthless society turns its hand only against the criminal—the wicked whom the orthodox law cannot touch or cannot find. When you say "Those fiends are hunting me" you also say, implicitly, "They have a good reason for so doing." All this is very plain, as you must perceive.'

"'And outside the present discussion,' he answered, stormily. 'I tell you, inspector, I want protection; protection against possible blackmail, and against the assassins, who may, after all, be on my track.'

"'I see that my suggestion regarding this woman has made you nervous of her.'

"'Perhaps it has,' he said, sullenly. 'Do you really think she is one of that gang?'

"'It is extremely probable,' I answered him. 'And in that case she was perhaps in this neighbourhood on the look-out for you during your year of secret residence with Edmund. In that event, her stumbling against you would not be so accidental



as it appeared. All the time that you believed yourself safe you may have been shadowed.'

"His face whitened. 'Is it possible?' said he, huskily.

"'It is almost certain,' I went on. 'Why, if she is as sharp as I consider her to be, your every action may have been under her observation. That letter, now, which you sent to the police——'

"'What about it?' he interrupted, as I paused.

"'This woman might have intercepted it.'

"'Intercepted it!' he gasped.

"'And delivered it to your enemies,' I continued, with slow and intense deliberation. 'So that, instead of Detective-Inspector Hopp coming to see you to-night——'

"And I finished my sentence by baring my left forearm and sliding off the thin, flesh-coloured plaster between wrist and elbow!

"He gave one look and every nerve and muscle in him turned to stone.

"'Death purges and expiates!' said I, speaking our formula, gentlemen; and from my right sleeve I slipped the dagger which is the terrible fang of the Human Leopard!"

THE narrator finished his brandy liqueur. There was a hum of great sensation.

"That was an evil heart stopped," said one of the company.

"You played your part well," commented another. "Those evidences in the room: Hopp himself, the real and genuine Hopp, could not have bettered those observations and deductions. But since you knew from the start that Elgood was your man, they were not rigidly necessary?"

"It amused me to make them, and to show him the net woven round him."

"And well have you told the story," added a third speaker. "Not without a touch of grimness—inspector."

"Ah, 'inspector' is good," smiled the long, lean man at the head of the table. He gave his shirt-front a final adjustment, and as he went to the door his beard glowed like a flame. He jerked the door open with suddenness, after pulling aside the heavy *portière*, and looked to right and left for a possible eavesdropper; but there was nobody in this below-street-level of the hotel corridor, save a passing servant or two.

"Gentlemen," said he, returning, "we held our last functional banquet in Vienna; this one here in London; and next year we will choose another *locale*. That will be safest and best. Shall we now break up?"

ACROSTICS.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 124.

SERVANT and noble lord here meet our gaze,
Both of them characters in Shakespeare's plays.

1. Choose a musician; central part select,
Half of a tool and half a port reject.
2. Seen on a monarch's arm. His consort fair,
With arms upraised, is seated in her chair.
3. Here dwelt three men of wondrous loftiness.
Longer was one whose height was somewhat less.
4. Half fate, half flowers, and three small words unite:
So was one known,—whose proper name please write.
5. The second name of one born May the fourth,
Before the mighty wizard of the North.
6. Headless and tailless here, a famous race—
Green quadruped is certain of a place.
7. Whichever way one upright we may spell,
A sacred mount or city answers well.
8. The creature goes ahead of us; to-day
Under another name it makes its way.
9. House first, or dog, then this, then tapestry;
At equal intervals occurred the three.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 124 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, *Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on November 10th.*

Two answers may be sent to every light.

It is essential that solvers, with their answers to this acrostic, should send also their real names and addresses.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 123.

(The Third of the Series.)

To philosophic optimists is known
What 'tis that clouds, without exception, own.

1. Theatrical, where goods are bought and sold,
An animal it frequently will hold.
2. These letters four must first in code appear,
And signs of correspondence will be here.
3. We live and learn, and in the summer time
Most of us have the subject of our rhyme.
4. Loveliness said that she would not be seen,
Might then decided on another queen.
5. Look to the rising sun, and you will find
By far the greatest part of it behind.
6. A burning question. Rearrange it, he
Does manual work with great dexterity.

PAX.

1. S	tal	L
2. I	nc	I
3. L	esso	N
4. V	asht	I
5. E	aster	N
6. R	oastin	G

NOTES.—Light 2. Co-inci-de. 3. We have less on i the summer. 4. The predecessor of Esther. 5. Aster 6. Organist; the manuals of an organ.

CHRISTMAS NUMBER

DEC 6 1922

THE STRAND MAGAZINE

PERIODICAL ROOM
GENERAL LIBRARY
UNIV. OF MICH.

1/6 NET

Exclusive to "The Strand Magazine"

WINSTON CHURCHILL'S

ESCAPE FROM THE BOER

"Oh, what a lovely spill!"

This is the sort of spill that every kiddy would like to see; then what a scramble there would be for those delicious morsels of Sharp's Super-Kreem Toffee!

In flavour, in richness and purity there is no toffee to equal Super-Kreem—a food as well as a confection which brings hours of gladness and joy into the hearts of children and grown-ups.

"Eat only the best toffee."

8D. per ¼ lb.

Sold loose by weight or in 4-lb. decorated tins—also in 1/- and 1/6 tins.

SHARP'S ASSORTED SUPER-KREEM TOFFEE now consists of nine varieties:—Plain, Home-Made, Cocoanut, Chocolate, Coffee, Almond, Brazil, Liquor and Mint.

E. SHARP & SONS, Ltd., Maidstone.

SHARP'S SUPER-KREEM TOFFEE

THE
STRAND
MAGAZINE
December, 1923.

I SEIZED THE TOP OF THE WALL WITH MY HAND AND I HAD ONE PARTING GLIMPSE OF THE SENTRIES STILL TALKING FIFTEEN YARDS AWAY.

(See page 538.)

MY ESCAPE FROM THE BOERS

Now Told in Full for the First Time

by

THE RT. HON.
WINSTON CHURCHILL

DURING the Boer War, in which I acted as War Correspondent for the *Morning Post* and later on served as a Lieutenant in the South African Light Horse, I gave some account of my escape from Pretoria. It was not, however, possible for me to tell the full story. To have done so would have been to compromise the liberty and perhaps the lives of those who helped me, and also to aggravate needlessly the difficulties of other British prisoners then still in captivity. For many years these reasons have disappeared; but I have not found the time or inclination to return to those exciting days, having since then been plunged almost continuously in strife and stress. Now for the first time having recovered that leisure and freedom from worry and anxiety to which we all look forward as the sequel to stirring times, I have found it possible again to turn over the records and memoranda of this vanished epoch in British affairs, and to complete an account which when it was written had necessarily to be mutilated and mysterious.

I WAS taken prisoner on the 15th November, 1899, when the British armoured train was cut off, derailed, and pounded to pieces by artillery at Chieveley Station, near Natal. I was taken with other prisoners to Pretoria by march and rail, and on November 19th was confined in the States Model Schools, then occupied by about fifty other British officer prisoners-of-war. I shall transcribe what I have already written where I cannot improve upon it.

"The States Model Schools stood in the midst of a quadrangle, and were surrounded on two sides by an iron grille and on two by a corrugated iron fence about ten feet high. These boundaries offered little obstacle to anyone who possessed the activity of youth, but the fact that they were guarded on the inside by sentries, fifty yards apart, armed with rifle and revolver, made them a well-nigh insuperable barrier. No walls are so hard to pierce as living walls.

After anxious reflection and continual watching, it was discovered by several of the prisoners that when the sentries along the eastern side walked about on their beats they were at certain moments unable to see the top of a few yards of the wall near the small circular lavatory office which can be seen on the plan. The electric lights in the middle of the quadrangle brilliantly lighted the whole place, but the eastern wall was in shadow. The first thing was therefore to pass the two sentries near the office. It was necessary to hit off the exact moment when both their backs should be turned together. After the wall was scaled one would be in the garden of the villa next door. There the plan came to an end. Everything after this was vague and uncertain. How to get out of the garden, how to pass unnoticed through the streets, how to evade the patrols that surrounded the town, and above all how to cover the two hundred and eighty miles to the Portuguese frontier, were questions which would arise at a later stage."

Together with two other officers I made an abortive attempt, not pushed with any decision, on the 11th December. There was no difficulty in getting into the circular office. But to climb out of it over the wall was a hazard of the sharpest character. Anyone doing so must at the moment he was on the top of the wall be plainly visible to the sentries fifteen yards away, if only they happened to look! Whether the sentries would challenge or fire depended entirely upon their individual dispositions, and no one could tell what they would do. Nevertheless I was determined that nothing should stop my taking the plunge the next day. As the 12th wore away my fears crystallized more and more into desperation. In the evening, after my two friends had made an attempt but had not found

Copyright, 1923, by Winston Churchill.

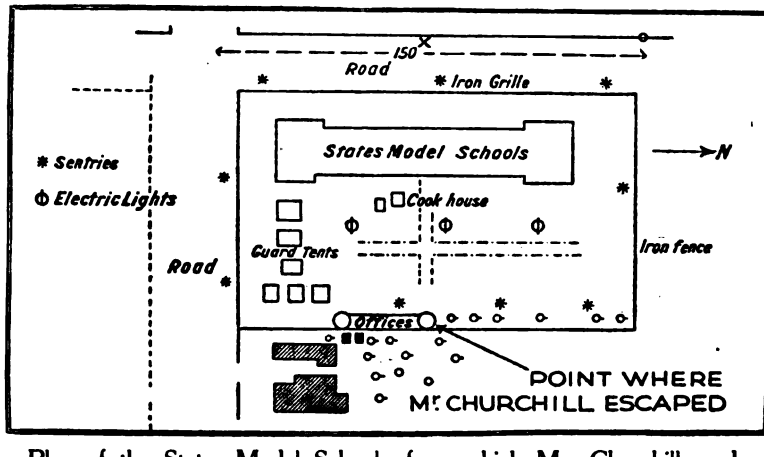
the moment propitious, I strolled across the quadrangle and secreted myself in the circular office. Through an aperture in the metal casing of which it was built I watched the sentries. For some time they remained stolid and obstructive. Then all of a sudden one turned and walked up to his comrade, and they began to talk. Their backs were turned.

Now or never! I stood on a ledge, seized the top of the wall with my hand, and drew myself up. Twice I let myself down again in sickly hesitation, and then with a third resolve scrambled up and over. My waistcoat got entangled with the ornamental metal work on the top. I had to pause for an appreciable moment to extricate myself. In this posture I had one parting glimpse of the sentries still talking with their backs turned fifteen yards away. One of them was lighting his cigarette, and I remember the glow on the inside of his hands as a distinct impression which my mind recorded. Then I lowered myself lightly down into the adjoining garden and crouched among the shrubs. I was free! The first step had been taken, and it was irrevocable. It now remained to await the arrival of my comrades. The bushes in the garden gave a good deal of cover, and in the moonlight their shadows fell dark on the ground. I lay here for an hour in great impatience and anxiety. People were continually moving about in the garden, and once a man came and apparently looked straight at me only a few yards away. Where were the others? Why did they not make the attempt?

"Suddenly I heard a voice from within the quadrangle say, quite loud, 'All up.' I crawled back to the wall. Two officers were walking up and down inside, jabbering Latin words, laughing and talking all manner of nonsense—amid which I caught my name. I risked a cough. One of the officers immediately began to chatter alone. The other said, slowly and clearly, 'They cannot get out. The sentry suspects. It's all up. Can you get back again?' But now all my fears fell from me at once. To go back was impossible. I could not hope to climb the wall unnoticed. There was no helpful ledge on the outside. Fate pointed onwards. Besides, I said to myself, 'Of course, I shall be recaptured, but I will at least have a run for my money.' I said to the officers, 'I shall go on alone.'

NOW I was in the right mood for these undertakings—failure being almost certain, no odds against success affected me. All risks were less than the certainty. A glance at the plan will show that the gate which led into the road was only a few yards from another sentry. I said to myself, '*Toujours de l'audace,*' put my hat on my head, strode into the middle of the garden, walked past the windows of the house without any attempt at concealment, and so went through the gate and turned to the left. I passed the sentry at less than five yards. Most of them knew me by sight. Whether he looked at me or not I do not know, for I never turned my head. I restrained with the utmost difficulty an impulse to run. But after walking a hundred yards and hearing no challenge, I knew that the second obstacle had been surmounted. I was at large in Pretoria.

I walked on leisurely through the night, humming a tune and choosing the middle of the road. The streets were full of Burghers, but they paid no attention to me. Gradually I reached the suburbs, and on a little bridge I sat down to reflect and consider. I was in the heart of the enemy's country. I knew no one to whom I could apply for succour. Nearly three hundred miles stretched between me and Delagoa Bay. My escape must be known at dawn. Pursuit would be immediate. Yet all exits were barred. The town was picketed, the



Plan of the States Model Schools, from which Mr. Churchill made his escape.

country was patrolled, the trains were searched, the line was guarded. I had seventy-five pounds in my pocket and four slabs of chocolate, but the compass and the map which might have guided me, the opium tablets and meat lozenges which should have sustained me, were in my friends' pockets in the States Model Schools. Worst of all, I could not speak a word of Dutch or Kaffir, and how was I to get food or direction?

But when hope had departed, fear had gone as well. I formed a plan. I would find the Delagoa Bay Railway. Without map or compass, I must follow that in spite of the pickets. I looked at the stars. Orion shone brightly. Scarcely a year before he had guided me when lost in the desert to the banks of the Nile. He had given me water. Now he should lead to freedom. I could not endure the want of either.

I hurled myself on the trucks, grasped some sort of hand-hold, and with a struggle seated myself on the couplings.

After walking south for half a mile I struck the railroad. Was it the line to Delagoa Bay or the Pietersburg branch? If it were the former it should run east. But, so far as I could see, this line ran northwards. Still, it might be only winding its way out among the hills. I resolved to follow it. The night was delicious. A cool breeze fanned my face, and a wild feeling of exhilaration took hold of me. At any rate, I was free, if only for an hour. That was something. The fascination of the adventure grew. Unless the stars in their courses fought for me, I could not escape. Where, then, was the need of caution? I marched briskly along the line. Here and there the lights of a picket fire gleamed. Every bridge had its watchers. But I passed them all, making very short *détours* at the dangerous places, and really taking scarcely any precautions. Perhaps that was the reason I succeeded.

As I walked I extended my plan. I could not march three hundred miles to the

frontier. I would board a train in motion and hide under the seats, on the roof, on the couplings—anywhere. What train should I take? The first, of course. After walking for two hours I perceived the signal lights of a station. I left the line and, circling round it, hid in the ditch by the track about two hundred yards beyond it. I argued that the train would stop at the station and that it would not have got up too much speed by the time it reached me. An hour passed. I began to grow impatient. Suddenly I heard the whistle and the approaching rattle. Then the great yellow head-lights of the engine flashed into view. The train waited five minutes at the station, and started again with much noise and steaming. I crouched by the track. I rehearsed the act in my mind. I must wait until the engine had passed, otherwise I should be seen. Then I must make a dash for the carriages.

The train started slowly, but gathered speed sooner than I had expected. The flaring lights drew swiftly near. The rattle became a roar. The dark mass hung for a second above me. The engine-driver silhouetted against his furnace glow, the black profile of the engine, the clouds of steam rushed past. Then I hurled myself on the trucks, clutched at something, missed, clutched again, missed again, grasped some sort of hand-hold, was swung off my feet—my toes bumping on the line, and with a struggle seated myself on the couplings of the fifth truck from the front of the train. It was a goods train, and the trucks were full of sacks, soft sacks covered with coal-dust. I crawled on top and burrowed in among them. In five minutes I was completely buried. The sacks were warm and comfortable. Perhaps the engine-driver had seen me rush up to the train and would give the alarm at the next station; on the other hand, perhaps not. Where was the train going to? Where would it be unloaded? Would it be searched? Was it on the Delagoa Bay line? What should I do in the morning? Ah, never mind that. Sufficient for the night was the luck thereof. Fresh plans for fresh contingencies. I resolved to sleep, nor can I imagine a more pleasing lullaby than the clatter of the train that carries you at twenty miles an hour away from the enemy's capital.

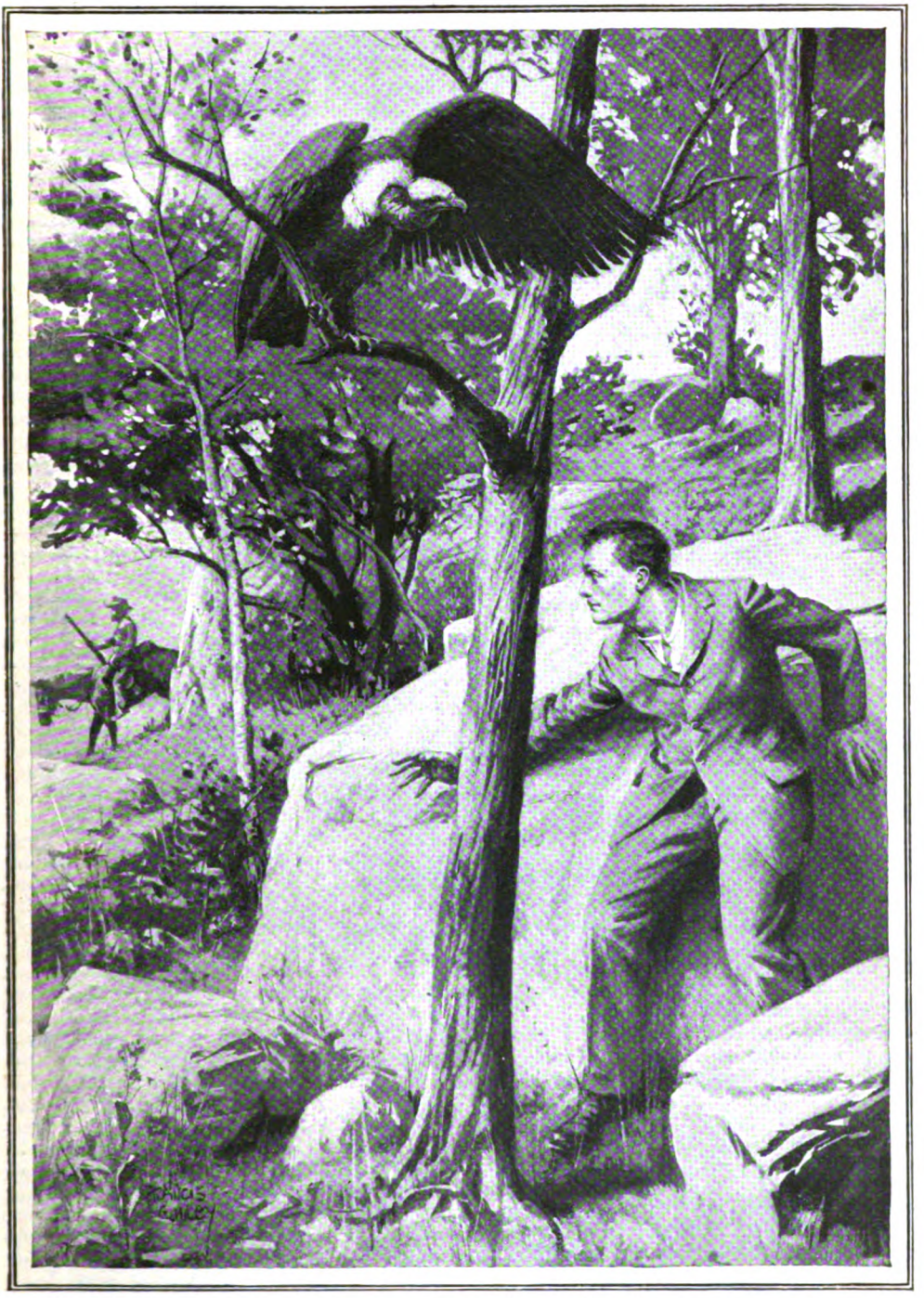
HOW long I slept I do not know, but I woke up suddenly with all feelings of exhilaration gone, and only the consciousness of oppressive difficulties heavy on me. I must leave the train before daybreak, so that I could drink at a pool and find some hiding-place while it was still dark. Another night I would board another train. I crawled from my cosy hiding-place among the sacks and sat again on the couplings. The train was running at a fair speed, but I felt it was time to leave it. I took hold of the iron handle at the back of the truck, pulled strongly with my left hand, and sprang. My feet struck the ground in two gigantic strides, and the next instant I was sprawling in the ditch, considerably shaken but unhurt. The train, my faithful ally of the night, hurried on its journey.

It was still dark. I was in the middle of a wide valley, surrounded by low hills, and carpeted with high grass drenched in dew. I searched for water in the nearest gully, and soon found a clear pool. I was very thirsty, but long after I had quenched my thirst I continued to drink, that I might have sufficient for the whole day.

Presently the dawn began to break, and the sky to the east grew yellow and red, slashed across with heavy black clouds. I saw with relief that the railway ran steadily towards the sunrise. I had taken the right line, after all.

Having drunk my fill, I set out for the hills, among which I hoped to find some hiding-place, and as it became broad daylight I entered a small grove of trees which grew on the side of a deep ravine. Here I resolved to wait till dusk. I had one consolation: no one in the world knew where I was—I did not know myself. It was now four o'clock. Fourteen hours lay between me and the night. My impatience to proceed while I was still strong doubled their length. At first it was terribly cold, but by degrees the sun gained power, and by ten o'clock the heat was oppressive. My sole companion was a gigantic vulture, who manifested an extravagant interest in my condition, and made hideous and ominous gurglings from time to time. From my lofty position I commanded a view of the whole valley. A little tin-roofed town lay three miles to the westward. Scattered farmsteads, each with a clump of trees, relieved the monotony of the undulating ground. At the foot of the hill stood a Kaffir kraal, and the figures of its inhabitants dotted the patches of cultivation or surrounded the droves of goats and cows which fed on the pasture. . . . During the day I ate one slab of chocolate, which, with the heat, produced a violent thirst. The pool was hardly half a mile away, but I dared not leave the shelter of the little wood, for I could see the figures of white men riding or walking occasionally across the valley, and once a Boer came and fired two shots at birds close to my hiding-place. But no one discovered me.

The elation and the excitement of the previous night had burnt away, and a chilling reaction followed. I was very



My sole companion was a gigantic vulture, who manifested an extravagant interest in my condition.

hungry, for I had had no dinner before starting, and chocolate, though it sustains, does not satisfy. I had scarcely slept, but yet my heart beat so fiercely and I was so nervous and perplexed about the future that I could not rest. I thought of all the chances that lay against me; I dreaded and detested more than words can express the prospect of being caught and dragged back to Pretoria. I found no comfort in any of the philosophical ideas which some men parade in their hours of ease and strength and safety. They seemed only fair-weather friends. I realized with awful force that no exercise of my own feeble wit and strength could save me from my enemies, and that without the assistance of that High Power which interferes in the eternal sequence of causes and effects more often than we are always prone to admit I could never succeed. I prayed long and earnestly for help and guidance. My prayer, as it seems to me, was swiftly and wonderfully answered."

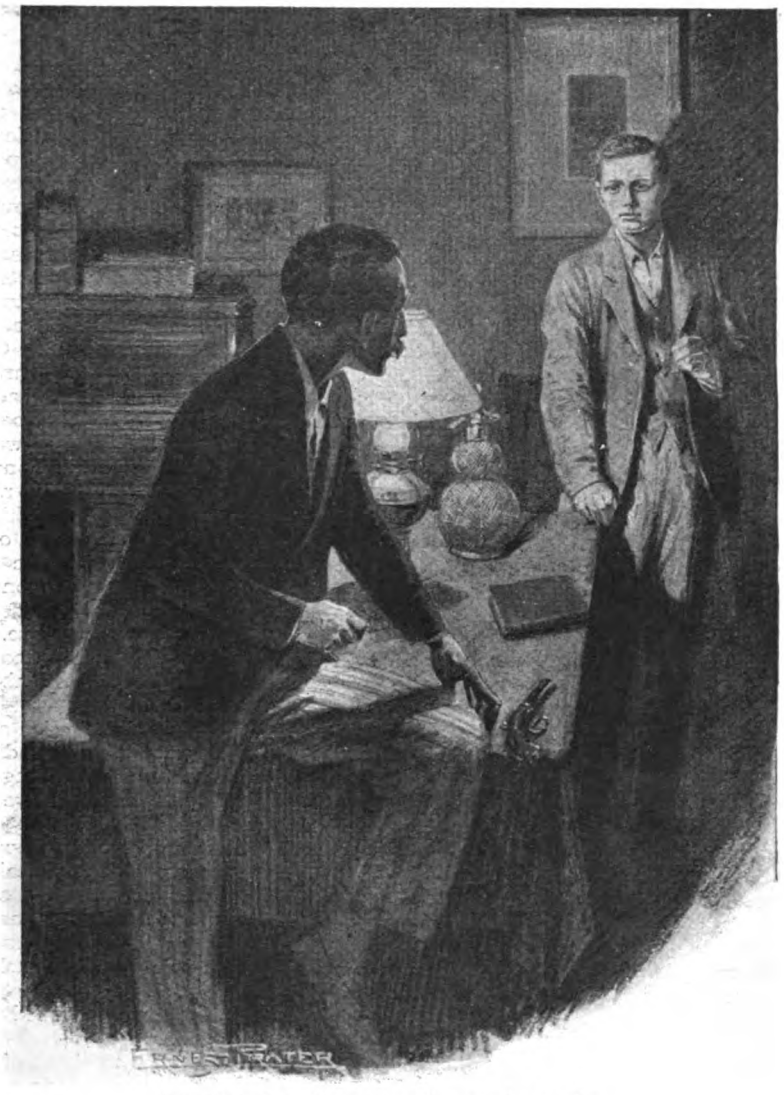
I WROTE these lines many years ago while the impression of the adventure was strong upon me. Then I could tell no more. The time has come when I can relate the events which followed, and which changed my nearly hopeless position into one of superior advantage.

During the day I had watched the railway with attention. I saw two or three trains pass along it each way. I argued that the same number would pass at night. I resolved to board one of these. I thought I could improve on my procedure of the previous evening. I had observed how slowly the trains, particularly long goods trains, climbed some of the steep gradients. Sometimes they were hardly going at a foot's pace. It would probably be easy to choose a point where the line was not only on an up grade but also on a curve. Thus I could board some truck on the convex side of the train when both the engine and the guard's van were bent away, and when consequently neither the engine-driver nor the guard would see me. This plan seemed to me in every respect sound. I saw myself leaving the train again before dawn, having been carried forward another sixty or seventy miles during the night. That would be scarcely one hundred and fifty miles from the frontier. And why should not the process be repeated? Where was the flaw? I could not see it. With three long bounds on three successive nights I could be in Portuguese territory. Meanwhile I still had two or three slabs of chocolate and a pocketful of crumbled biscuit—enough, that is to say, to keep body and soul together at a pinch without running the awful risk of recapture entailed by accosting a single human being. In this mood I watched with increasing impatience the arrival of darkness.

The long day reached its close at last. The western clouds flushed into fire; the shadows of the hills stretched out across the valley; a ponderous Boer wagon with its long team crawled slowly along the track towards the township; the Kaffirs collected their herds and drew them round their kraal; the daylight died, and soon it was quite dark. Then, and not until then, I set forth. I hurried to the railway line, scrambling along through the boulders and high grass and pausing on my way to drink at a stream of sweet cold water. I made my way to the place where I had seen the trains crawling so slowly up the slope, and soon found a point where the curve of the track fulfilled all the conditions of my plan. Here, behind a little bush, I sat down and waited hopefully. An hour passed; two hours passed; three hours—and yet no train. Six hours had now elapsed since the last, whose time I had carefully noted, had gone by. Surely one was due. Another hour slipped away. Still no train! My plan began to crumble and my hopes to ooze out of me. After all, was it not quite possible that no trains ran on this part of the line during the dark hours? This was in fact the case, and I might well have continued to wait in vain till daylight. However, between twelve and one in the morning I lost patience and started along the track, resolved to make at any rate ten or fifteen miles of my journey. I did not make much progress. Every bridge was guarded by armed men: every few miles were huts. At intervals there were stations with tin-roofed villages clustering around them. All the veldt was bathed in the bright rays of the full moon, and to avoid these dangerous places I had to make wide circuits and even to creep along the ground. Leaving the railroad I fell into bogs and swamps, brushed through high grass dripping with dew, and waded across the streams over which the bridges carried the railway. I was soon drenched to the waist. I had been able to take very little exercise during my month's imprisonment, and I was quickly tired with walking and with want of food and sleep. Presently I approached a station. It was a mere platform in the veldt, with two or three buildings and huts around it. But laid up on the sidings, obviously for the night, were three long goods trains. Evidently the flow of traffic over the railway was uneven. These three trains, motionless in the moonlight, confirmed my fears that traffic was not maintained by night on this part of the line. Where, then,

was my plan which in the afternoon had looked so fine and sure?

It now occurred to me that I might board one of these stationary trains immediately, and hiding amid its freight be carried forward during the next day—and night too if all were well. On the other hand, where were they going to? Where would they stop? Where would they be unloaded? Once I entered a wagon my lot would be cast. I might find myself ignominiously unloaded and recaptured at Witbank or Middelburg, or at any station in the long two hundred and fifty miles which separated me from the frontier. It was necessary at all costs before taking such a step to find out where these trains were going. To do this I must penetrate the station, examine the labels on the trucks or on the merchandise, and see if I could extract any certain guidance from them. I crept up to the platform and got between two of the long trains on the siding. I was proceeding to examine the markings on the trucks when loud voices rapidly approaching on the outside of the train filled me with fear. Several Kaffirs were laughing and shouting in their unmodulated tones, and I heard, as I thought, a European voice arguing or ordering. At any rate, it was enough for me. I retreated between the two trains to the extreme end of the siding, and slipped stealthily but rapidly into the grass of the illimitable plain.



"I think I had better tell you the truth.
"I think you had," he said, slowly.

There was nothing for it but to plod on—but in an increasingly purposeless and hopeless manner. I felt very miserable when I looked around and saw here and there the lights of houses and thought of the warmth and comfort within them, but knew that they meant only danger to me. Far off on the moonlit horizon there presently began to shine the row of six or eight big lights which marked either Witbank or Middelburg station. Out in the darkness to my left gleamed two or three fires. I was sure they were not the lights of houses, but how far off they were or what they were I could not be certain. The idea formed in my mind that they were the fires at a

Kaffir kraal. Then I began to think that the best use I could make of my remaining strength would be to go to these Kaffirs. I had heard that they hated the Boers and were friendly to the British. At any rate, they would probably not arrest me. They might give me food and a dry corner to sleep in. Although I could not speak a word of their language, yet I thought perhaps they might understand the value of a British bank-note. They might even be induced to help me. A guide, a pony—but, above all, rest, warmth, and food—such were the promptings which dominated my mind. So I set out towards the fires.

I MUST have walked a mile or so in this resolve before a realization of its weakness and imprudence took possession of me. Then I turned back again to the railway line and retraced my steps perhaps half the distance. Then I stopped and sat down, completely baffled, destitute of any idea what to do or where to turn. Suddenly without the slightest reason all my doubts disappeared. It was certainly by no process of logic that they were dispelled. I just felt quite clear that I would go to the Kaffir kraal. I had sometimes in former years held a "Planchette" pencil and written while others had touched my wrist or hand. I acted in exactly the same unconscious or subconscious manner now.

I walked on rapidly towards the fires, which I had in the first instance thought were not more than a couple of miles from the railway line. I soon found they were much farther away than that. After about an hour or an hour and a half they still seemed almost as far off as ever. But I persevered, and presently between two and three o'clock in the morning I perceived that they were not the fires of a Kaffir kraal. The angular silhouette of buildings began to draw out against them, and soon I saw that I was approaching a group of houses around the mouth of a coal-mine. The wheel which worked the winding gear was plainly visible, and I could see that the fires which had led me so far were from the furnaces of the engines. Hard by, surrounded by one or two slighter structures, stood a small but substantial stone house two storeys high.

I halted in the wilderness to survey this scene and to revolve my action. It was still possible to turn back. But in that direction I saw nothing but the prospect of further futile wanderings terminated by hunger, fever, discovery, or surrender. On the other hand, here in front was a chance. I had heard it said before I escaped that in the mining district of Witbank and Middelburg there were a certain number of English residents who had been suffered to remain in the country in order to keep the mines working. Had I been led to one of these? What did this house which frowned dark and inscrutable upon me contain? A Briton or a Boer; a friend or a foe? Nor did this exhaust the possibilities. I had my seventy-five pounds in English notes in my pocket. If I revealed my identity, I thought that I could give reasonable assurance of a thousand. I might find some indifferent neutral-minded person who out of good nature or for a large sum of money would aid me in my bitter and desperate need. Certainly I would try to make what bargain I could now—now while I still had the strength to plead my cause and perhaps to extricate myself if the results were adverse. Still the odds were heavy against me, and it was with faltering and reluctant steps that I walked out of the shimmering gloom of the veldt into the light of the furnace fires, advanced towards the silent house, and struck with my fist upon the door.

THERE was a pause. Then I knocked again. And almost immediately a light sprang up above and an upper window opened.

"*Wer ist da?*" cried a man's voice.

I felt the shock of disappointment and consternation to my fingers.

"I want help; I have had an accident," I replied.

Some muttering followed. Then I heard steps descending the stairs, the bolt of the door was drawn, the lock was turned. It was opened abruptly, and in the darkness of the passage a tall man hastily attired, with a pale face and dark moustache, stood before me.

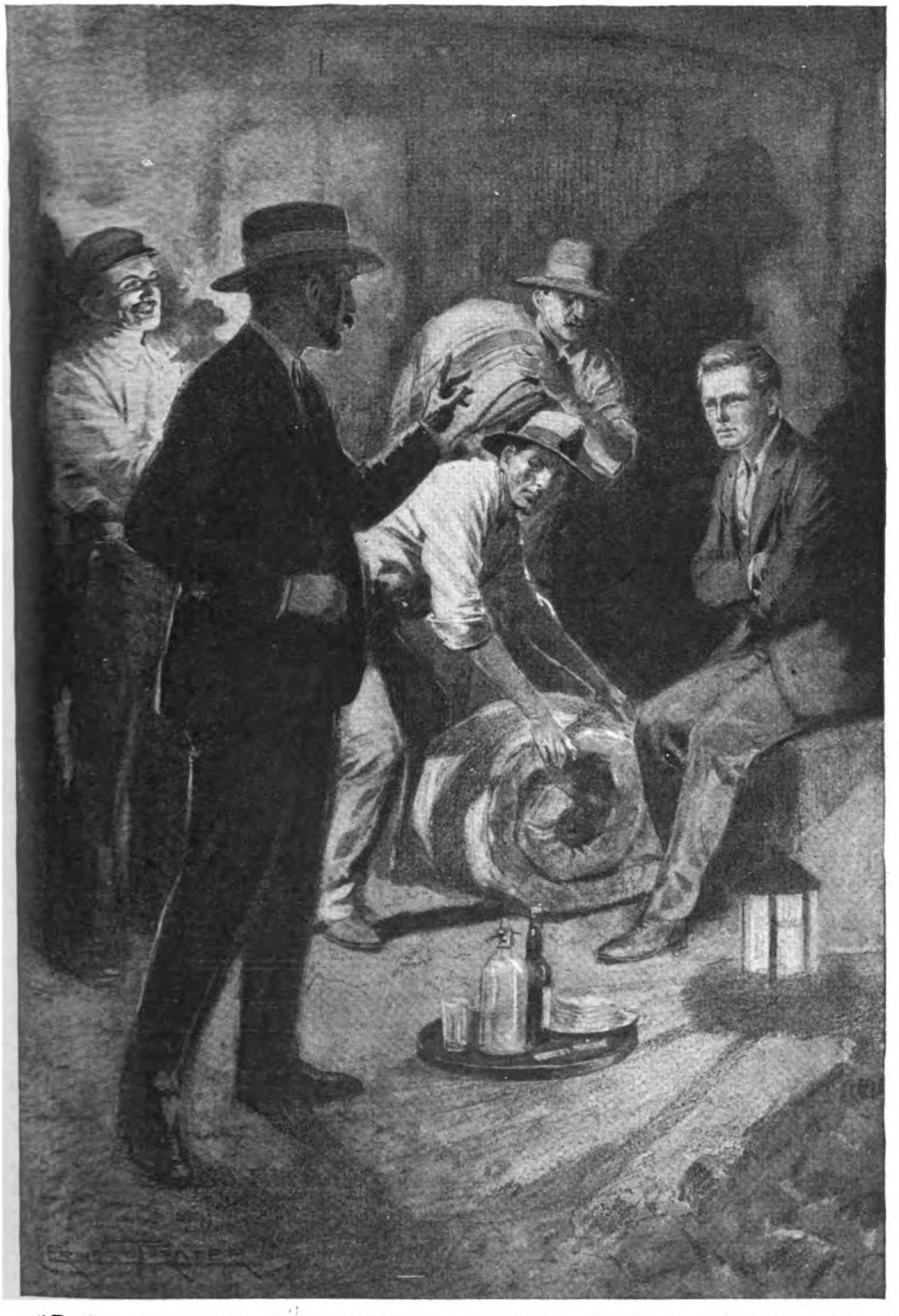
"What do you want?" he said, this time in English.

I had now to think of something to say. I wanted above all to get into parley with this man, to get matters in such a state that instead of raising an alarm and summoning others he would discuss things quietly.

"I am a burgher," I began. "I have had an accident. I was going to join my commando at Komati Poort. I have fallen off the train. We were skylarking. I have been unconscious for hours. I think I have dislocated my shoulder."

It is astonishing how one thinks of these things. This story leapt out as if I had learnt it by heart. Yet I had not the slightest idea what I was going to say or what the next sentence would be.

The stranger regarded me intently, and after some hesitation said at length, "Well, come in." He retreated a little into the darkness of the passage, threw open a



"Don't you move from here, whatever happens," was the parting injunction. My four friends trooped off with their lanterns, and I was left alone.

door on one side of it, and pointed with his left hand into a dark room. I walked past him and entered, wondering if it was to be my prison. He followed, struck a light, lit a lamp, and set it on the table at the far side of which I stood. I was in a small room, evidently a dining-room and office in one. I noticed besides the large table a roll desk, two or three chairs, and one of those machines for making soda-water, consisting of two glass globes set one above the other and encased in thin netting. On his end of the table my host had laid a revolver, which he had hitherto presumably been holding in his right hand.

"I think I'd like to know a little more about this railway accident of yours," he said, after a considerable pause.

"I think," I replied, "I had better tell you the truth."

"I think you had," he said, slowly.

So I took the plunge and threw all I had upon the board.

"I am Winston Churchill, War Correspondent of the *Morning Post*. I escaped last night from Pretoria. I am making my way to the frontier." (Making my way!) "I have plenty of money. Will you help me?"

There was another long pause. My companion rose from the table slowly and locked the door. After this act, which struck me as unpromising and was certainly ambiguous, he advanced upon me and suddenly held out his hand.

"Thank God you have come here! It is the only house for twenty miles where you would not have been handed over. But we are all British here, and we will see you through."

IT is easier to recall across the gulf of years the spasm of relief which swept over me than it is to describe it. A moment before I had thought myself trapped; and now friends, food, resources, aid were all at my disposal. I felt like a drowning man pulled out of the water and informed he has won the Derby!

My host now introduced himself as Mr. John Howard, manager of the Transvaal Collieries. He had become a naturalized burgher of the Transvaal some years before the war. But out of consideration for his British race and some inducements which he had offered to the local Field Cornet he had not been called up to fight against the British. Instead he had been allowed to remain with one or two others on the mine, keeping it pumped out and in good order until coal cutting could be resumed. He had with him at the mine-head, besides his secretary, who was British, the engine-man from Lancashire and two Scottish miners. All these four were British subjects and had been allowed to remain only upon giving their parole to observe strict neutrality. He himself as burgher of the Transvaal Republic would be guilty of treason in harbouring me, and liable to be shot if caught at the time or found out later on.

"Never mind," he said, "we will fix it up somehow." And added, "The Field Cornet was round here this afternoon asking about you. They have got the hue and cry out all along the line and all over the district."

I said that I did not wish to compromise him.

Let him give me food, a pistol, a guide, and if possible a pony, and I would make my own way to the sea, marching by night across country far away from the railway line or any habitation.

He would not hear of it. He would fix up something. But he enjoined the utmost caution. Spies were everywhere. He had two Dutch servant-maids actually sleeping in the house. There were many Kaffirs employed about the mine premises and on the pumping machinery of the mine. Surveying these dangers he became very thoughtful.

Mr. Winston Churchill at the time of the Boer War.

Then: "But you are famishing."

I did not contradict him. In a moment he had bustled off into the kitchen, telling me meanwhile to help myself from a whisky bottle and the soda-water machine which I have already mentioned. He returned after an interval with the best part of a cold leg of mutton and various other delectable commodities, and, leaving me to do full justice to these, quitted the room and let himself out of the house by a back door.

Nearly an hour passed before Mr. Howard returned. In this period my physical well-being had been brought into harmony with the improvement in my prospects. I felt confident of success and equal to anything.

"It's all right," said Mr. Howard. "I have seen the men, and they are all for it. We must put you down the pit to-night, and there you will have to stay till we can see how to get you out of the country. One difficulty," he said, "will be the *skoff* (food). The Dutch girl sees every mouthful I eat. The cook will want to know what has happened to her leg of mutton. I shall have to think it all out during the night. You must get down the pit at once. We'll make you comfortable enough."

Accordingly, just as the dawn was breaking I followed my host across a little yard into the enclosure in which stood the winding-wheel of the mine. Here a stout man, introduced as Mr. Dewsnap, of Oldham, locked my hand in a grip of crushing vigour.

"They'll all vote for you next time," he whispered.

(I had contested Oldham unsuccessfully in June of that year.)

A door was opened and I entered the cage. Down we shot into the bowels of the earth. At the bottom of the mine were the two Scottish miners with lanterns and a big bundle which afterwards proved to be a mattress and blankets. We walked for some time through the pitchy labyrinth, with frequent turns, twists, and alterations of level, and finally stopped in a sort of chamber where the air was cool and fresh. Here my guide set down his bundle, and Mr. Howard handed me a couple of candles, a bottle of whisky, and a box of cigars.

"There's no difficulty about these," he said. "I keep them under lock and key. Now we must plan how to feed you to-morrow."

"Don't you move from here, whatever happens," was the parting injunction. "There will be Kaffirs about the mine after daylight, but we shall be on the look-out that none of them wanders this way. None of them has seen anything so far."

My four friends trooped off with their lanterns, and I was left alone. Viewed from the velvety darkness of the pit, life seemed bathed in rosy light. After the perplexity and even despair through which I had passed I counted upon freedom as certain. Instead of a humiliating recapture and long months of monotonous imprisonment, probably in the common jail, I saw myself once more rejoining the Army with a real exploit to my credit, and in that full enjoyment of freedom and keen pursuit of adventure dear to the heart of youth. In this comfortable mood, and speeded by intense fatigue, I soon slept the sleep of the just—and of the triumphant.

But the writer was far from being out of the wood. Next month he will relate the rest of the adventures which still lay before him.

A NEW AND COMPLETE

SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY,

"The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire,"

By A. CONAN DOYLE,

WILL APPEAR NEXT MONTH.

"I couldn't bear for us not to be friends. We've been friends so long."

The Farn

by

HUGH WALPOLE

ILLUSTRATED BY A. GILBERT R.O.I.

I.

AS Foster moved unconsciously across the room, bent towards the bookcase, and stood leaning forward a little, choosing now one book, now another, with his eye, his host, seeing the muscles of the back of his thin, scraggy neck stand out above his low flannel collar, thought of the ease with which he could squeeze that throat and the pleasure, the triumphant, lustful pleasure, that such an action would give him.

The low white-walled, white-ceilinged room was flooded with the mellow, kindly Lakeland sun. October is a wonderful month in the English Lakes, golden, rich, and perfumed, slow suns moving through apricot-tinted skies to ruby evening glories; the shadows lie then thick about that beautiful country, in dark purple patches, in long web-like patterns of silver gauze, in thick splotches of amber and grey. The clouds pass in galleons across the mountains, now veiling, now revealing, now descending with ghost-like armies to the very breast of the plains, suddenly rising to the softest of blue

Copyright, 1923, by Hugh Walpole.

skies and lying thin in lazy languorous colour.

Fenwick's cottage looked across to Low Fells; on his right, seen through side windows, sprawled the hills above Derwentwater.

Fenwick looked at Foster's back and felt suddenly sick, so that he sat down, veiling his eyes for a moment with his hand. Foster had come up there, come all the way from London, to explain. It was so like Foster to want to explain, to want to put things right. For how many years had he known Foster? Why, for twenty at least, and during all those years Foster had been for ever determined to put things right with everybody. He could not bear to be disliked; he hated that anyone should think ill of him; he wanted everyone to be his friend. That was one reason, perhaps, why Foster had got on so well, had prospered so in his career, one reason, too, why Fenwick had not.

For Fenwick was the opposite of Foster in this. He did not want friends, he certainly did not care that people should like him—that is, people for whom, for one reason or another, he had contempt—and he had contempt for quite a number of people.

Fenwick looked at that long, thin, bending back and felt his knees tremble. Soon Foster would turn round and that high reedy voice would pipe out something about the books. "What jolly books you have, Fenwick!" How many, many times in the long watches of the night when Fenwick could not sleep had he heard that pipe sounding close there—yes, in the very shadows of his bed! And how many times had Fenwick replied to it: "I hate you! You are the cause of my failure in life! You have been in my way always. Always, always, always! Patronizing and pretending, and in truth showing others what a poor thing you thought me, how great a failure, how conceited a fool! I know. You can hide nothing from me! I can hear you!"

For twenty years now Foster had been persistently in Fenwick's way. There had been that affair, so long ago now, when Robins had wanted a sub-editor for his wonderful review, the *Parthenon*, and Fenwick had gone to see him and they had had a splendid talk. How magnificently Fenwick had talked that day, with what enthusiasm he had shown Robins (who was blinded by his own conceit, anyway) the kind of paper the *Parthenon* might be, how Robins had caught his own enthusiasm, how he had pushed his fat body about the room, crying: "Yes, yes, Fenwick—that's fine! That's fine indeed!"—and then how, after all, Foster had got that job.

The paper had only lived for a year or so, it is true, but the connection with it had brought Foster into prominence just as it might have brought Fenwick!

THEN five years later there was Fenwick's novel, "The Bitter Aloe"—the novel upon which he had spent three years of blood-and-tears endeavour—and then, in the very same week of publication, Foster brings out "The Circus," the novel that made his name, although, Heaven knows, the thing was poor enough sentimental trash. You may say that one novel cannot kill another—but can it not? Had not "The Circus" appeared would not that group of London know-alls—that conceited, limited, ignorant, self-satisfied crowd, who nevertheless can do, by their talk, so much to affect a book's good or evil fortunes—have talked about "The Bitter Aloe" and so forced it into prominence? As it was, the book was stillborn and "The Circus" went on its prancing, triumphant way.

After that there had been many occasions—some small, some big—and always in one way or another that thin, scraggy body of Foster's was interfering with Fenwick's happiness.

The thing had become, of course, an obsession with Fenwick. Hiding up there in the heart of the Lakes, with no friends, almost no company, and very little money, he was given too much to brooding over his failure. He *was* a failure and it was not his own fault. How could it be his own fault with his talents and his brilliance? It was the fault of modern life and its lack of culture, the fault of the stupid material mess that made up the intelligences of human beings—and the fault of Foster.

Always Fenwick hoped that Foster would keep away from him. He did not know what he would not do did he see the man. And then one day to his amazement he received a telegram: "Passing through this way. May I stop with you Monday and Tuesday? Giles Foster."

Fenwick could scarcely believe his eyes, and then—from curiosity, from cynical contempt, from some deeper, more mysterious motive that he dared not analyse—he had telegraphed "Come."

And here the man was. And he had come—would you believe it?—to "put things right." He had heard from Hamlin Eddis that "Fenwick was hurt with him, had some kind of a grievance."

"I didn't like to feel that, old man, and so I thought I'd just stop by and have it out with you, see what the matter was, and put it right."

Last night after supper Foster had tried to put it right. Eagerly, his eyes like a good dog's who is asking for a bone that he

knows that he thoroughly deserves, he had held out his hand and asked Fenwick to " say what was up."

Fenwick simply had said that nothing was up; Hamlin Eddis was a damned fool.

" Oh, I'm glad to hear that ! " Foster had cried, springing up out of his chair and putting his hand on Fenwick's shoulder. " I'm glad of that, old man. I couldn't bear for us not to be friends. We've been friends so long."

Lord ! how Fenwick hated him at that moment !

II.

" WHAT a jolly lot of books you have ! " Foster turned round and looked at Fenwick with eager, gratified eyes. " Every book here is interesting ! I like your arrangement of them too and those open bookshelves—it always seems to me a shame to shut up books behind glass ! "

Foster came forward and sat down quite close to his host. He even reached forward and laid his hand on his host's knee. " Look here ! I'm mentioning it for the last time—positively ! But I do want to make quite certain. There *is* nothing wrong between us, is there, old man ? I know you assured me last night. but I just want——"

Fenwick looked at him and, surveying him, felt suddenly an exquisite pleasure of hatred. He liked the touch of the man's hand on his knee; he himself bent forward a little and, thinking how agreeable it would be to push Foster's eyes in, deep, deep into his head, crunching them, smashing them to purple, leaving the empty, staring, bloody sockets, said :—

" Why, no. Of course not. I told you last night. What could there be ? "

The hand gripped the knee a little more tightly.

" I *am* so glad ! That's splendid ! Splendid ! I hope you won't think me ridiculous, but I've always had an affection for you ever since I can remember. I've always wanted to know you better. I've admired your talent so greatly. That novel of yours—the—the—the one about the Aloe——"

" ' The Bitter Aloe ' ? "

" Ah, yes, that was it. That was a splendid book. Pessimistic, of course, but still fine. It ought to have done better. I remember thinking so at the time."

" Yes, it ought to have done better."

" Your time will come, though. What I say is that good work always tells in the end."

" Yes, my time will come."

The thin, piping voice went on :—

" Now, I've had more success than I deserved. Oh, yes, I have. You can't deny it. I'm not being falsely modest. I mean it. I've got some talent, of course, but not so much as people say. And you ! Why, you've got so much *more* than they acknowledge. You have, old man. You have indeed. Only—I do hope you'll forgive my saying this—perhaps you haven't advanced quite as you might have done. Living up here, shut away here, closed in by all these mountains, in this wet climate —always raining—why, you're out of things ! You don't see people, don't talk and discover what's really going on. Why, look at me ! "

Fenwick turned round and looked at him.

" Now, I have half the year in London, where one gets the best of everything, best talk, best music, best plays, and then I'm three months abroad, Italy or Greece or somewhere, and then three months in the country. Now that's an ideal arrangement. You have everything that way."

" Italy or Greece or somewhere ! "

Something turned in Fenwick's breast, grinding, grinding, grinding. How he had longed, oh, how passionately, for just one week in Greece, two days in Sicily ! Sometimes he had thought that he might run to it, but when it had come to the actual counting of the pennies—— And how this fool, this fathead, this self-satisfied, conceited, patronizing——

He got up, looking out at the golden sun

" What do you say to a walk ? " he suggested. " The sun will last for a good hour yet."

III.

AS soon as the words were out of his lips he felt as though someone else had said them for him. He even turned half-round to see whether anyone else were there Ever since Foster's arrival on the evening before he had been conscious of this sensation. A walk ? Why should he take Foster for a walk, show him his beloved country, point out those curves and lines and hollows, the broad silver shield of Derwentwater, the cloudy purple hills hunched like blankets about the knees of some recumbent giant ? Why ? It was as though he had turned round to someone behind him and had said, " You have some further design in this."

They started out. The road sank abruptly to the lake, then the path ran between trees at the water's edge. Across the lake tones of bright yellow light, crocus hued, rode upon the blue. The hills were dark.

The very way that Foster walked bespoke the man. He was always a little ahead of you, pushing his long, thin body along with little eager jerks as though did he not hurry he would miss something that would be

immensely to his advantage. He talked, throwing words over his shoulder to Fenwick as you throw crumbs of bread to a robin.

"Of course I was pleased. Who would not be? After all it's a new prize. They've only been awarding it for a year or two, but it's gratifying—really gratifying—to secure it. When I opened the envelope and found the cheque there—well, you could have knocked me down with a feather. You could, indeed. Of course, a hundred pounds isn't much. But it's the honour——"

Whither were they going? Their destiny was as certain as though they had no free-will. Free-will? There is no free-will. All is Fate. Fenwick suddenly laughed aloud.

Foster stopped.

"Why, what is it?"

"What's what?"

"You laughed."

"Something amused me."

Foster slipped his arm through Fenwick's.

"It *is* jolly to be walking along together like this, arm in arm, friends. I'm a sentimental man, I won't deny it. What I say is that life is short and one must love one's fellow-beings or where is one? You live too much alone, old man." He squeezed Fenwick's arm. "That's the truth of it."

It was torture, exquisite heavenly torture. It was wonderful to feel that thin, bony arm pressing against his. Almost you could hear the beating of that other heart. Wonderful to feel that arm and the temptation to take it in your two hands and to bend it and twist it and then to hear the bones crack . . . crack . . . crack . . . Wonderful to feel that temptation rise through one's body like boiling water and yet not to yield to it. For a moment Fenwick's hand touched Foster's. Then he drew himself apart.

"We're at the village. This is the hotel where they all come in the summer. We turn off at the right here. I'll show you my tarn."

IV.

"YOUR tarn?" asked Foster. "Forgive my ignorance, but what *is* a tarn exactly?"

"A tarn is a miniature lake, a pool of water lying in the lap of the hill. Very quiet, lovely, silent. Some of them are immensely deep."

"I should like to see that."

"It is some little distance—up a rough road. Do you mind?"

"Not a bit. I have long legs."

"Some of them are immensely deep—unfathomable—nobody touched the bottom—but quiet, like glass, with shadows only——"

"Do you know, Fenwick, but I have always been afraid of water—I've never learnt to swim. I'm afraid to go out of my depth. Isn't that ridiculous? But it is all because at my private school, years ago, when I was a small boy, some big fellows took me and held me with my head under the water and nearly drowned me. They did indeed. They went farther than they meant to. I can see their faces."

Fenwick considered this. The picture leapt to his mind. He could see the boys—large strong fellows, probably—and this little skinny thing like a frog, their thick hands about his throat, his legs like grey sticks kicking out of the water, their laughter, their sudden sense that something was wrong, the skinny body all flaccid and still——

He drew a deep breath.

Foster was walking beside him now, not ahead of him, as though he were a little afraid and needed reassurance. Indeed the scene had changed. Before and behind them stretched the uphill path, loose with shale and stones. On their right, on a ridge at the foot of the hill, were some quarries, almost deserted, but the more melancholy in the fading afternoon because a little work still continued there, faint sounds came from the gaunt listening chimneys, a stream of water ran and tumbled angrily into a pool below, once and again a black silhouette, like a question-mark, appeared against the darkening hill.

It was a little steep here and Foster puffed and blew.

Fenwick hated him the more for that. So thin and spare, and still he could not keep in condition! They stumbled, keeping below the quarry, on the edge of the running water, now green, now a dirty white-grey, pushing their way along the side of the hill.

Their faces were set now towards Helvellyn. It rounded the cup of hills closing in the base and then sprawling to the right.

"There's the tarn!" Fenwick exclaimed—and then added, "The sun's not lasting as long as I had expected. It's growing dark already."

Foster stumbled and caught Fenwick's arm.

"This twilight makes the hills look strange—like living men. I can scarcely see my way."

"We're alone here," Fenwick answered. "Don't you feel the stillness? The men will have left the quarry now and gone home. There is no one in all this place but ourselves. If you watch you will see a strange green light steal down over the hills. It lasts but for a moment and then it is dark.

"Ah, here is my tarn. Do you know how I love this place, Foster? It seems to

belong especially to me, just as much as all your work and your glory and fame and success seem to belong to you. I have this and you have that. Perhaps in the end we are even after all. Yes. . . .

" But I feel as though that piece of water belonged to me and I to it, and as though we should never be separated—yes. . . . Isn't it black ?

" It is one of the deep ones. No one has ever sounded it. Only Helvellyn knows, and one day I fancy that it will take me, too, into its confidence. Will whisper its secrets——"

Foster sneezed.

" Very nice. Very beautiful, Fenwick. I like your tarn. Charming. And now let's turn back. That is a difficult walk beneath the quarry. It's chilly, too."

" Do you see that little jetty there ? " Fenwick led Foster by the arm. " Someone built that out into the water. He had a boat there, I suppose. Come and look down. From the end of the little jetty it looks so deep and the mountains seem to close round."

Fenwick took Foster's arm and led him to the end of the jetty. Indeed the water looked deep here. Deep and very black. Foster peered down, then he looked up at the hills that did indeed seem to have gathered close around him. He sneezed again.

" I've caught a cold, I am afraid. Let's turn homewards, Fenwick, or we shall never find our way."

"Home then," said Fenwick, and his hands closed about the thin, scraggy neck. For the instant the head half turned and two startled, strangely childish eyes stared; then, with a push that was ludicrously simple, the body was impelled forward, there was a sharp cry, a splash, a stir of something white against the swiftly gathering dusk, again and then again, then far-spreading ripples, then silence.

V.

THE silence extended. Having enwrapped the tarn it spread as though with finger on lip to the already quiescent hills. Fenwick shared in the silence. He luxuriated in it. He did not move at all. He stood there looking upon the inky water of the tarn, his arms folded, a man lost in intensest thought. But he was not thinking. He was only conscious of a warm luxurious relief, a sensuous feeling that was not thought at all.

Foster was gone—that tiresome, prating, conceited, self-satisfied fool ! Gone, never to return. The tarn assured him of that. It stared back into Fenwick's face approvingly as though it said : " You have done well—a clean and necessary job. We have done it together, you and I. I am proud of you."

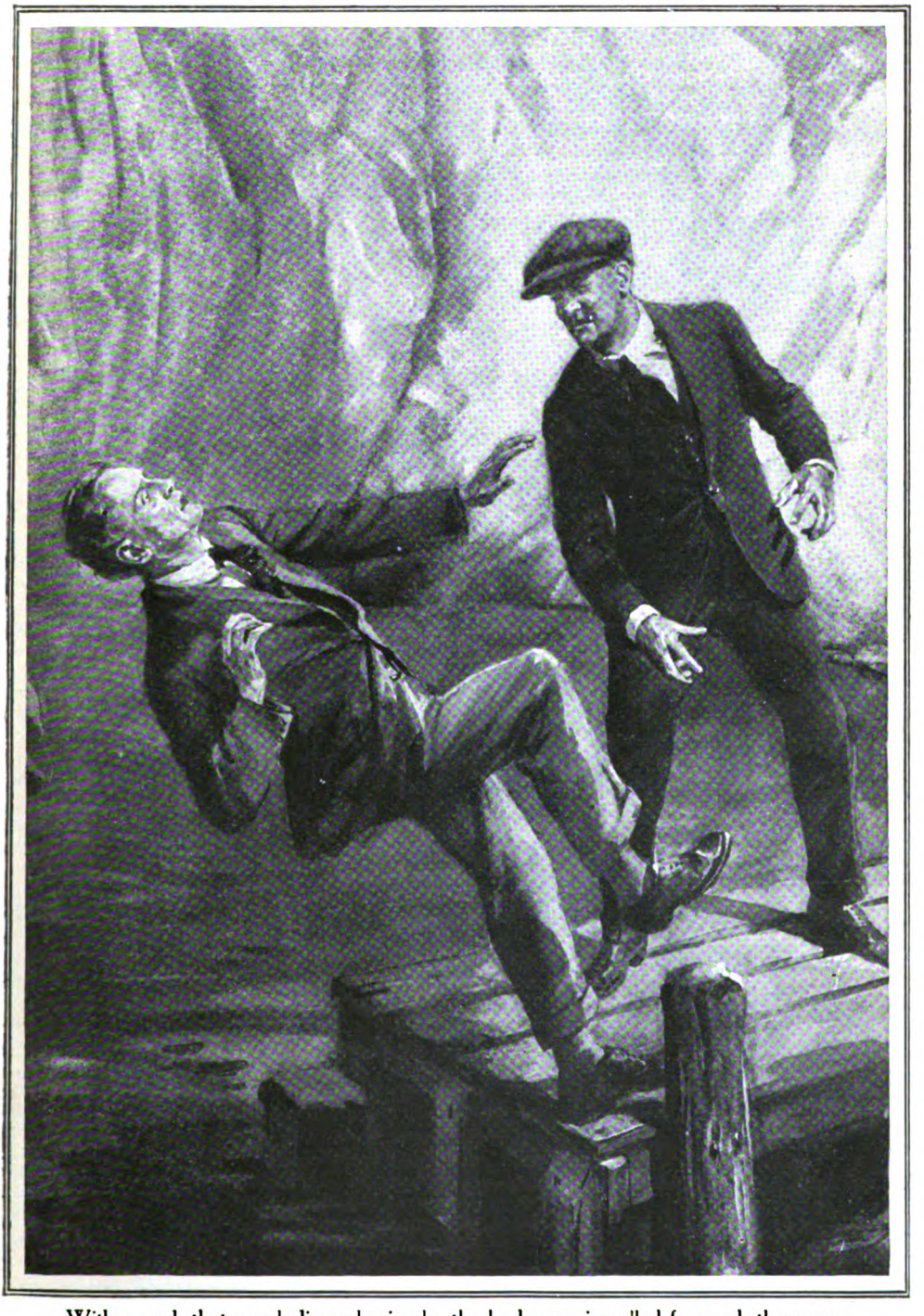
He was proud of himself. At last he had done something definite with his life. Thought, eager, active thought, was beginning now to flood his brain. For all these years he had hung around in this place doing nothing but cherish grievances, weak, backboneless—now at last there was action. He drew himself up and looked at the hills. He was proud—and he was cold. He was shivering. He turned up the collar of his coat. Yes, there was the faint green light that always lingered in the shadows of the hills for a brief moment before darkness came. It was growing late. He had better return.

Shivering now so that his teeth chattered, he started off down the path, and then was aware that he did not wish to leave the tarn. The tarn was friendly; the only friend he had in all the world. As he stumbled along in the dark this sense of loneliness grew. He was going home to an empty house. There had been a guest in it last night. Who was it ? Why, Foster, of course—Foster with his silly laugh and amiable mediocre eyes. Well, Foster would not be there now. No, he never would be there again.

And suddenly Fenwick started to run. He did not know why, except that, now that he had left the tarn, he was lonely. He wished that he could have stayed there all night, but because he was cold he could not, and so now he was running so that he might be at home with the lights and the familiar furniture—and all the things that he knew to reassure him.

As he ran the shale and stones scattered beneath his feet. They made a tit-tattering noise under him, and someone else seemed to be running too. He stopped, and the other runner also stopped. He breathed in the silence. He was hot now. The perspiration was trickling down his cheeks. He could feel a dribble of it down his back inside his shirt. His knees were pounding. His heart was thumping. And all around him the hills were so amazingly silent, now like indiarubber clouds that you could push in or pull out as you do those indiarubber faces, grey against the night sky of a crystal purple upon whose surface, like the twinkling eyes of boats at sea, stars were now appearing.

His knees steadied, his heart beat less fiercely, and he began to run again. Suddenly he had turned the corner and was out at the hotel. Its lamps were kindly and reassuring. He walked then quietly along the lake-side path, and had it not been for the certainty that someone was treading



With a push that was ludicrously simple, the body was impelled forward, there was a sharp cry, a splash, then silence.

behind him he would have been comfortable and at his ease. He stopped once or twice and looked back, and once he stopped and called out "Who's there?" Only the rustling trees answered.

He had the strangest fancy, but his brain was throbbing so fiercely that he could not think, that it was the tarn that was following him, the tarn slipping, sliding along the road, being with him so that he should not be lonely. He could almost hear the tarn whisper in his ear: "We did that together, and so I do not wish you to bear all the responsibility yourself. I will stay with you, so that you are not lonely."

He climbed the road towards home, and there were the lights of his house. He heard the gate click behind him as though it were shutting him in. He went into the sitting-room, lighted and ready. There were the books that Foster had admired.

The old woman who looked after him appeared.

"Will you be having some tea, sir?"

"No, thank you, Annie."

"Will the other gentleman be wanting any?"

"No; the other gentleman is away for the night."

"Then there will be only one for supper?"

"Yes, only one for supper."

He sat in the corner of the sofa and fell instantly into a deep slumber.

VI.

HE woke when the old woman tapped him on the shoulder and told him that supper was served: The room was dark save for the jumping light of two uncertain candles. Those two red candlesticks—how he hated them up there on the mantelpiece! He had always hated them, and now they seemed to him to have something of the quality of Foster's voice—that thin, reedy, piping tone.

He was expecting at every moment that Foster would enter, and yet he knew that he would not. He continued to turn his head towards the door, but it was so dark there that you could not see. The whole room was dark except just there by the fireplace, where the two candlesticks went whining with their miserable twinkling plaint.

He went into the dining-room and sat down to his meal. But he could not eat anything. It was odd—that place by the table where Foster's chair should be. Odd, naked, and made a man feel lonely.

He got up once from the table and went to the window, opened it and looked out. He listened for something. A trickle as of running water, a stir, through the silence, as though some deep pool were filling to the brim. A rustle in the trees, perhaps. An owl hooted. Sharply, as though someone had spoken to him unexpectedly behind his shoulder, he closed the window and looked back, peering under his dark eyebrows into the room.

Later on he went up to bed.

VII.

HAD he been sleeping, or had he been lying lazily as one does, half-dozing, half-luxuriously not-thinking? He was wide awake now, utterly awake, and his heart was beating with apprehension. It was as though someone had called him by name. He slept always with his window a little open and the blind up. To-night the moonlight shadowed in sickly fashion the objects in his room. It was not a flood of light nor yet a sharp splash, silvering a square, a circle, throwing the rest into ebony blackness. The light was dim, a little green, perhaps, like the shadow that comes over the hills just before dark.

He stared at the window, and it seemed to him that something moved there. Within, or rather against the green-grey light, something silver-tinted glistened. Fenwick stared. It had the look, exactly, of slipping water.

Slipping water! He listened, his head up, and it seemed to him that from beyond the window he caught the stir of water, not running, but rather welling up and up, gurgling with satisfaction as it filled and filled.

He sat up higher in bed, and then saw that down the wallpaper beneath the window water was undoubtedly trickling. He could see it lurch to the projecting wood of the sill, pause, and then slip, slither down the incline. The odd thing was that it fell so silently.

Beyond the window there was that odd gurgle, but in the room itself absolute silence. Whence could it come? He saw the line of silver rise and fall as the stream on the window-ledge ebbed and flowed.

He must get up and close the window. He drew his legs above the sheets and blankets and looked down.

He shrieked. The floor was covered with a shining film of water. It was rising. As he looked it had covered half the short stumpy legs of the bed. It rose without a wink, a bubble, a break! Over the sill it poured now in a steady flow but soundless. Fenwick sat back in the bed, the clothes gathered to his chin, his eyes blinking, the Adam's apple throbbing like a throttle in his throat.

But he must do something, he must stop this. The water was now level with the seats of the chairs, but still was soundless. Could he but reach the door!

The water now was at his neck. He struggled, crying, "Let me go! Let me go!
I hate you! I hate you!"

He put down his naked foot, then cried again. The water was icy cold. Suddenly, leaning, staring at its dark unbroken sheen, something seemed to push him forward. He fell. His head, his face was under the icy liquid; it seemed adhesive and in the heart of its ice hot like melting wax. He struggled to his feet. The water was breast-high. He screamed again and again. He could see the looking-glass, the row of books, the picture of Dürer's "Horse," aloof, impervious. He beat at the water and flakes of it seemed to cling to him like scales of fish, clammy to his touch. He struggled, ploughing his way, towards the door.

The water now was at his neck. Then something had caught him by the ankle. Something held him. He struggled, crying, "Let me go! Let me go! I tell you to let me go! I hate you! I hate you! I will not come down to you! I will not——"

The water covered his mouth. He felt that someone pushed in his eyeballs with bare knuckles. A cold hand reached up and caught his naked thigh.

VIII.

IN the morning the little maid knocked and, receiving no answer, came in, as was her wont, with his shaving-water. What she saw made her scream. She ran for the gardener.

They took the body with its staring, protruding eyes, its tongue sticking out between the clenched teeth, and laid it on the bed.

The only sign of disorder was an over-turned water-jug. A small pool of water stained the carpet.

It was a lovely morning. A twig of ivy idly, in the little breeze, tapped the pane.

ACROSTICS.

OUR twenty-fifth series of acrostics begins with No. 125, printed below, and will run for four months. Prizes to the value of twelve guineas will be awarded to the most successful solvers.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 125.

HERE may an evening well be spent
At time of joy and merriment.

1. Our ills with this the doctor heals.
2. This place the hidden foe conceals.
3. African river should be black.
4. A tail we get, a tail we lack.
5. Sixteen or twelve go to a pound.
6. In prophet's name a home is found.
7. A phrase; one letter changed, unwise.
8. Of coffee think, and Arab skies.
9. Six letters, though they sound like two,
   Will surely be too much for you.

PAX.

Answers to Acrostic No. 125 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE STRAND MAGAZINE, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than by the first post on December 11th. They must be written on half-sheets of notepaper, or on cards; at the foot of the solution must appear the solver's pseudonym, and (except in the case of postcards) nothing else. Flimsy paper should not be used.

One alternative answer may be sent to each light.

ANSWER TO DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 124.

SERVANT and noble lord here meet our gaze,
Both of them characters in Shakespeare's plays.

1. Choose a musician; central part select,
   Half of a tool and half a port reject.
2. Seen on a monarch's arm. His consort fair,
   With arms upraised, is seated in her chair.
3. Here dwelt three men of wondrous loftiness.
   Longer was one whose height was somewhat less.
4. Half fate, half flowers, and three small words unite.
   So was one known,—whose proper name please write.
5. The second name of one born May the fourth.
   Before the mighty wizard of the North.
6. Headless and tailless here, a famous race—
   Green quadruped is certain of a place.
7. Whichever way one upright we may spell,
   A sacred mount or city answers well.
8. The creature goes ahead of us; to-day
   Under another name it makes its way.
9. House first, or dog, then this, then tapestry:
   At equal intervals occurred the three.

PAX.

1. B	i	A
2. A	lderami	N
3. L	aru	T
4. T	rapass	I
5. H	icklin	G
6. A	rath	O
7. Z	io	N
8. A	m	U
9. R	amillie	S

NOTES. — Proem. Much Ado About Nothing. The Merchant of Venice; Balthazar or Balthasar. The Winter's Tale. Light 1. Longfellow, Hiawatha. Chibiabos; chisel, Boston. 2. The star, Alpha Cephei; Cassiopeia. 3. Kipling, Life's Handicap, The Lang Men o' Larut. 4. Metastasio; Kismet, asters. 5. William Hick ing Prescott; Pre-Scott. 6. Marathon. Lewis Carroll. Through the Looking Glass; rath, a green pig. 7. Zion or Sion. 8. The River Oxus. 9. Blenheim, 1704; Ramillies, 1706; Oudenarde, 1708.

ACROSTIC No. 122: "Indigeti" is accepted for the sixth light, also "Dunderhead," "Dud," and "Dizzard" for the seventh light.

MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES

by

A. CONAN DOYLE

CHAPTER VI.

MY START AT SOUTHSEA.

WHAT with cleaning up, answering the bell, doing my modest shopping, which was measured in pennies rather than shillings, and perfecting my simple household arrangements, the time did not hang heavily upon my hands. It is a wonderful thing to have a house of your own for the first time, however humble it may be. I lavished all my care upon the front room to make it possible for patients. The back room was furnished with my trunk and a stool. Inside the trunk was my larder, and the top of it was my dining-room table. There was gas laid on, and I rigged a projection from the wall upon which I could rest a pan over the gas-jet. In this way I cooked bacon with great ease, and became expert in getting a wonderful lot of slices off a pound. Bread, bacon, and tea, with an occasional saveloy—what could man ask for more? It is (or was) perfectly easy to live well upon a shilling a day.

I had obtained a fair consignment of drugs on tick from a wholesale house, and these also were ranged round the sides of the back room. From the very beginning a few stray patients of the poorest class, some of them desirous of novelty, some disgruntled with their own doctors, the greater part owing bills and ashamed to face their creditor, came to consult me and consume a bottle of my medicine. I could pay for my food by the drugs I sold. It was as well, for I had no other way of paying for it, and I had sworn not to touch the ten golden pieces which represented my rent. There have been times when I could not buy a postage-stamp and my letters have had to wait, but the ten golden coins still remained intact.

It was a busy thoroughfare, with a church upon one side of my house and an hotel on the other. The days passed pleasantly enough, for it was a lovely warm autumn, and I sat in the window of my consulting-room screened by the rather dingy curtain which I had put up, and watched the passing crowd or read my book, for I had spent part of my scanty funds on making myself a member of a circulating library. In spite of my sparse food, or more probably on account of it, I was extraordinarily fit and well, so that at night, when all hope of patients was gone for that day, I would lock up my house and walk many miles to work off my energy. With its imperial associations it is a glorious place, and even now, if I had to live in a town outside London, it is surely to Southsea, the residential quarter of Portsmouth, that I would turn. The history of the past carries on into the history of to-day, the new torpedo-boat flies past the old *Victory* with the same white ensign flying from each, and the Elizabethan culverins and sakers can still be seen in the same walk which brings you to the huge artillery of the forts. There is a great glamour there to anyone with the historic sense—a sense which I drank in with my mother's milk.

It had never entered my head yet that literature might give me a career, or anything beyond a little casual pocket-money,

Copyright, 1923, by A. Conan Doyle.

but already it was a deciding factor in my life, for I could not have held on, and must have either starved or given in but for the few pounds which Mr. Hogg sent me, for they enabled all other smaller sums to be spent in nourishment. I have wondered sometimes as I look back that I did not contract scurvy, for most of my food was potted and I had no means of cooking vegetables. However, I felt no grievance at the time nor any particular perception that my mode of life was unusual, nor, indeed, any particular anxiety about the future. At that age everything seems an adventure—and there was always the novel pleasure of the house.

Once I had a moment of weakness during which I answered an advertisement which asked for a doctor to attend coolies in the tea gardens of the Terai. I spent a few unsettled days waiting for an answer, but none came, and I settled down once more to my waiting and hoping.

ARRIVAL OF MY BROTHER.

As the weeks passed and I had no one with whom to talk, I began to think wistfully of the home circle at Edinburgh, and to wonder why, with my eight-roomed house, one or more of them should not come to keep me company. The girls were already governessing or preparing to do so, but there was my little brother Innes. It would relieve my mother and yet help me if he could join me. So it was arranged, and one happy evening the little knickerbockered fellow, just ten years old, joined me as my comrade. No man could have had a merrier and brighter one. In a few weeks we had settled down to a routine life, I having found a good day-school for him. The soldiers of Portsmouth were already a great joy to him, and his future career was marked out by his natural tastes, for he was a born leader and administrator. Little did I foresee that he would win distinction in the greatest of all wars, and die in the prime of his manhood—but not before he knew that complete victory had been attained. Even then our thoughts were very military, and I remember how we waited together outside the office of the local paper that we might learn the result of the bombardment of Alexandria.

Turning over some old papers after these pages were written I came upon a letter written in straggling schoolboy script by my little brother to his mother at home which may throw an independent light upon those curious days. It is dated August 16th, 1882. He says :—

"The patients are crowding in. We have made three bob this week. We have vaxenated a baby and got hold of a man with consumtion, and to-day a gipsy's cart came up to the door selling baskets and chairs so we determined not to let the man ring as long as he liked. After he had rong two or three times Arthur yelled out at the pitch of his voice Go a way, but the man rang again so I went down to the door and pulled open the letter-box and cried out go a way. The man began to swere at me and say that he wanted to see Arthur. All this time Arthur thought that the door was open and was yelling Shut that door. Then I came upstairs and told Arthur what the man had said so Arthur went down and opened the door and we found out that the gipsy's child had measles. . . . After all we got sixpence out of them and that is all ways something."

I remember the incident well, and certainly my sudden change of tone from the indignant householder, who is worried by a tramp, to my best bedside manner, in the hopes of a fee, must have been very amusing. My recollection is, however, that it was the gipsy who got sixpence out of us.

I BUY UP A SHOP.

For some time Innes and I lived entirely alone, doing the household tasks between us, and going long walks in the evening to keep ourselves fit. Then I had a brain-wave, and I put an advertisement in the evening paper that a ground-floor was to let in exchange for services. I had numerous applicants in reply, and out of them I chose two elderly women who claimed to be sisters—a claim which they afterwards failed to make good. When once they were installed we became quite a civilized household and things began to look better. There were complex quarrels, however, and one of the women left. The other soon afterwards followed suit. As the first woman had seemed to me to be the most efficient, I followed her up and found that she had started a small shop. Her rent was weekly, so that was easily settled, but she talked gloomily about her stock. "I will buy everything in your shop," I said in a large way. It cost me exactly seventeen-and-sixpence, and I was loaded up for many months with matches, cakes of blacking, and other merchandise. From then onwards our meals were cooked for us, and we became in all ways normal.

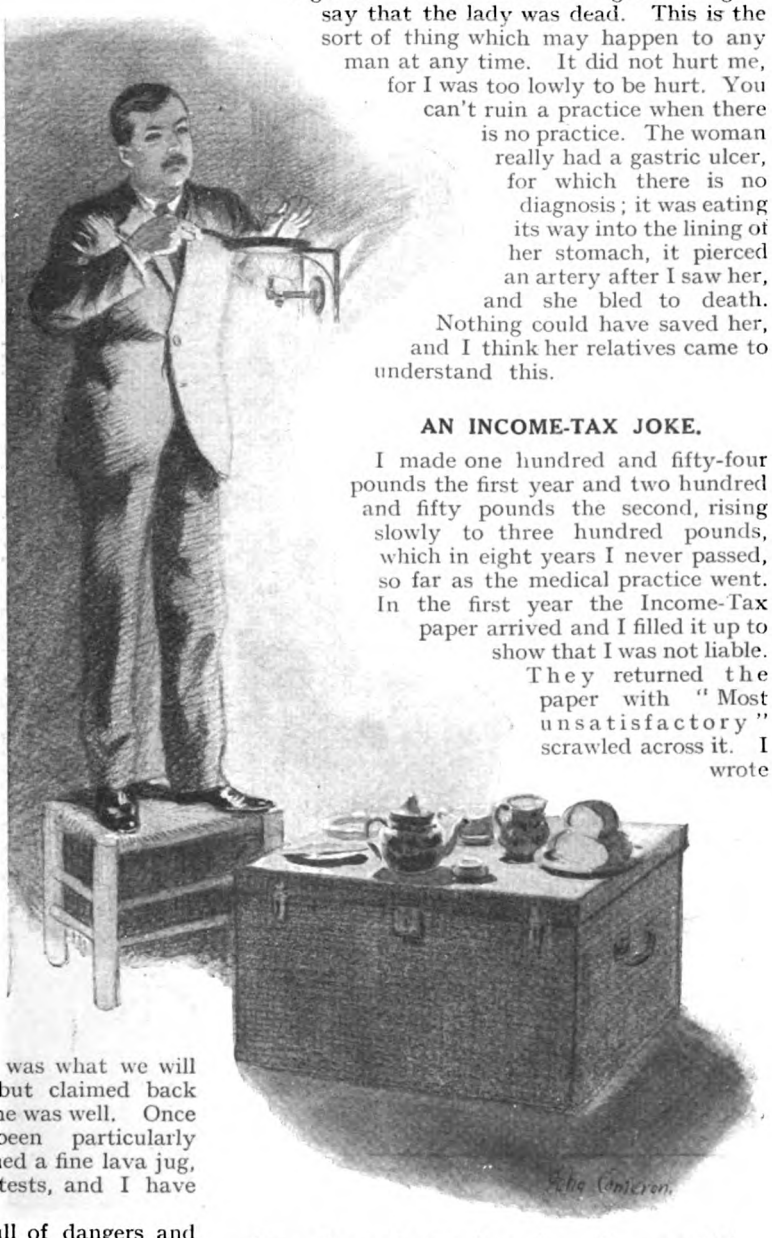
Month followed month, and I picked up a patient here and a patient there until the nucleus of a little practice had been formed. Sometimes it was an accident, sometimes an emergency case, sometimes a new-comer to the town or one who had quarrelled with his doctor. I mixed with people as far as I

could, for I learned that a brass plate alone will never attract, and people must see the human being who lies in wait behind it. Some of my tradespeople gave me their custom in return for mine, and mine was so small that I was likely to have the best of the bargain. There was a grocer who developed epileptic fits, which meant butter and tea to us. Poor fellow, he could never have realized the mixed feelings with which I received the news of a fresh outbreak. Then there was a very tall, horse-faced old lady with an extraordinary dignity of bearing. She would sit framed in the window of her little house, like the picture of a "grande dame" of the old *régime*. But every now and again she went on a wild burst, in the course of which she would skim plates out of the window at the passers-by. I was the only one who had influence over her at such times, for she was a haughty, autocratic old person. Once she showed an inclination to skim a plate at me also, but I quelled her by assuming a gloomy dignity as portentous as her own. She had some art treasures which she heaped upon me when she was what we will politely call "ill," but claimed back again the moment she was well. Once when she had been particularly troublesome I retained a fine lava jug, in spite of her protests, and I have got it yet.

Medical life is full of dangers and pitfalls, and luck must always play its part in a man's career. Many a good man has been ruined by pure bad luck. On one occasion I was called in to a lady who was suffering from what appeared to be dyspepsia of a rather severe type. There was absolutely nothing to indicate anything more serious. I therefore reassured the family, spoke lightly of the illness, and walked home to make up a bismuth mixture for her, calling on one or two other cases on the way. When I got home I found a messenger waiting to say that the lady was dead. This is the sort of thing which may happen to any man at any time. It did not hurt me, for I was too lowly to be hurt. You can't ruin a practice when there is no practice. The woman really had a gastric ulcer, for which there is no diagnosis; it was eating its way into the lining of her stomach, it pierced an artery after I saw her, and she bled to death. Nothing could have saved her, and I think her relatives came to understand this.

AN INCOME-TAX JOKE.

I made one hundred and fifty-four pounds the first year and two hundred and fifty pounds the second, rising slowly to three hundred pounds, which in eight years I never passed, so far as the medical practice went. In the first year the Income-Tax paper arrived and I filled it up to show that I was not liable. They returned the paper with "Most unsatisfactory" scrawled across it. I wrote



I rigged a projection from the wall upon which I could rest a pan over the gas-jet. In this way I cooked with great ease.

"I entirely agree" under the words, and returned it once more. For this little bit of cheek I was had up before the assessors and duly appeared with my ledger under my arm. They could make nothing, however, out of me or my ledger, and we parted with mutual laughter and compliments.

In the year 1885 my brother left me to go to a public school in Yorkshire. Shortly afterwards I was married. A lady named Mrs. Hawkins, a widow of a Gloucestershire family, had come to Southsea with her son and daughter, the latter a very gentle and amiable girl. I was brought into contact with them through the illness of the son, which was of a sudden and violent nature, arising from cerebral meningitis. As the mother was very awkwardly situated in lodgings I volunteered to furnish an extra bedroom in my house and give the poor lad, who was in the utmost danger, my personal attention. His case was a mortal one, and in spite of all I could do he passed away a few days later. Such a death under my own roof naturally involved me in a good deal of anxiety and trouble—indeed, if I had not had the foresight to ask a medical friend to see him with me on the day before he passed away I should have been in a difficult position. The funeral was from my house. The family were naturally grieved at the worry to which they had quite innocently exposed me, and so our relations became intimate and sympathetic, which ended in the daughter consenting to share my fortunes.

The Income-Tax assessors could make nothing out of me or my ledger, and we parted with mutual laughter and compliments.

MY MARRIAGE.

We were married on August 6th, 1885, and no man could have had a more gentle and amiable companion. Our union was marred by the sad ailment which came after a very few years to cast its shadow over our lives, but it comforts me to think that during the time when we were together there was no single occasion when our affection was disturbed by any serious breach or division, the credit of which lies entirely with her own quiet philosophy, which enabled her to bear with smiling patience not only her own sad illness, which lasted so long, but all those other vicissitudes which life brings with it. I rejoice to think that, though she married a penniless doctor, she was spared long enough to fully appreciate the pleasure and the material comforts which worldly success was able to bring us. She had some small income of her own, which enabled me to expand my simple housekeeping in a way which gave her from the first the decencies, if not the luxuries, of life.

Mr. and Mrs. Conan Doyle in 1885.

In many ways my marriage marked a turning-point in my life. A bachelor, especially one who had been a wanderer like myself, drifts easily into Bohemian habits, and I was no exception. I cannot look back upon those years with any spiritual satisfaction, for I was still in that valley of darkness. I had ceased to butt my head incessantly against what seemed to be an impenetrable wall, and I had resigned myself to ignorance upon that which is the most momentous question in life—for a voyage is bleak indeed if one has no conception to what port one is bound. I had laid aside the old charts as useless, and had quite despaired of ever finding a new one which would enable me to steer an intelligible course, save towards that mist which was all that my pilots, Huxley, Mill, Spencer, and others, could see ahead of us. My mental attitude is correctly portrayed in "The Stark Munro Letters." A dim light of dawn was to come to me soon in an uncertain, fitful way which was destined in time to spread and grow brighter.

Up to now the main interest of my life lay in my medical career. But with the more regular life and the greater sense of responsibility, coupled with the development of brain and power, the natural literary side of me began slowly to spread until it was destined to push the other entirely aside. Thus a new phase had begun, part medical, part literary, and part philosophical, which I shall deal with in another chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

MY FIRST LITERARY SUCCESS.

DURING the years before my marriage I had from time to time written short stories which were good enough to be marketable at very small prices—three pounds on an average—but not good enough to reproduce. They are scattered about amid the pages of *London Society*, of *All the Year Round*, of *Temple Bar*, the *Boys' Own Paper*, and other journals. There let them lie. They served their purpose in relieving me a little of that financial burden which always pressed upon me. I can hardly have

earned more than ten or fifteen pounds a year from this source, so that the idea of making a living by it never occurred to me. But though I was not putting out I was taking in. I still have notebooks full of all sorts of knowledge which I acquired during that time. It is a great mistake to start putting out cargo when you have hardly stowed any on board. My own slow methods and natural limitations made me escape this danger.

FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE "CORNHILL."

After my marriage, however, my brain seems to have quickened and both my imagination and my range of expression were greatly improved. Most of the short stories which appeared eventually in my "Captain of the *Polestar*" were written in those years from 1885 to 1890. Some of them are perhaps as good, honest work as any that I have done. What gave me great pleasure, and for the first time made me realize that I was ceasing to be a hack writer and was getting into good company, was when James Payn accepted my short story, "Habakuk Jephson's Statement," for the *Cornhill*. I had a reverence for this splendid magazine, with its traditions from Thackeray to Stevenson, and the thought that I had won my way into it pleased me even more than the cheque for thirty pounds which came duly to hand. The tale was, of course, anonymous—such was the law of the magazine—which protects the author from abuse as well as prevents his winning fame. One paper began its review by the phrase, "*Cornhill* opens its new number with a story which would have made Thackeray turn in his grave." A dear old gentleman who knew me hurried across the road to show me the paper with these cheering words. Another, more gracious, said, "*Cornhill* begins the New Year with an exceedingly powerful story in which we seem to trace the hand of the author of 'The New Arabian Nights.'" It was great praise, but something less warm, which came straight to my own address, would have pleased me better.

I had two other stories soon in the *Cornhill*—"John Huxford's Hiatus" and "The Ring of Thoth." I also penetrated the stout Scottish barrier of *Blackwood* with a story, "The Physiologist's Wife," which was written when I was under the influence of Henry James. But I was still in the days of very small things—so small that, when a paper sent me a woodcut and offered me four guineas if I would write a story to correspond, I was not too proud to accept. It was a very bad woodcut, and I think that the story corresponded all right. I remember writing a New Zealand story, though why I should have written about a place of which I knew nothing I cannot imagine. Some New Zealand critic pointed out that I had given the exact bearings of the farm mentioned, seventy miles to the east or west of the town of Nelson, and that in that case it was situated fifty miles out on the floor of the Pacific Ocean. These little things will happen. There are times when accuracy is necessary and others where the idea is everything and the place quite immaterial.

It was about a year after my marriage that I realized that I could go on doing short stories for ever and never make headway. What is necessary is that your name should be on the back of a volume. Only so do you assert your individuality and get the full credit or discredit of your achievement. I had for some time, from 1884 onwards, been engaged upon a sensational book of adventure which I had called "The Firm of Girdlestone," which represented my first attempt at a connected narrative. Save for occasional patches it is a worthless book, and, like the first book of everyone else, unless he is a great original genius, it was too reminiscent of the work of others. I could see it then, and could see it even clearer later. When I sent it to publishers and they scorned it, I quite acquiesced in their decision, and finally let it settle, after its periodical flights to town, a dishevelled mass of manuscript at the back of a drawer.

THE GENESIS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

I felt now that I was capable of something cleaner and crisper and more workmanlike. Gaboriau had rather attracted me by the neat dovetailing of his plots, and Poe's masterful detective, M. Dupin, had from boyhood been one of my heroes. But could I bring an addition of my own? I thought of my old teacher, Joe Bell, of his eagle face, of his curious ways, of his eerie trick of spotting details. If he were a detective he would surely reduce this fascinating but unorganized business to something nearer to an exact science. I would try if I could get this effect. It was surely possible in real life, so why should I not make it plausible in fiction? It is all very well to say that a man is clever, but the reader wants to see examples of it—such examples as Bell gave us every day in the wards. The idea amused me. What should I call the fellow? I still possess the leaf of a notebook (a facsimile of it is given on the opposite page) with alternative names. One rebelled against the elementary art which gave some inkling of character in

the name, and created Mr. Sharps or Mr. Ferrets. First it was Sherrinford Holmes; then it was Sherlock Holmes. He could not tell his own exploits, so he must have a commonplace comrade as a foil—an educated man of action who could both join in the exploits and narrate them. A drab, quiet name for this unostentatious man. Watson would do. And so I had my puppets and wrote my "Study in Scarlet."

I knew that the book was as good as I could make it, and I had high hopes. When "Girdlestone" used to come circling back with the precision of a homing pigeon I was grieved but not surprised, for I acquiesced in the decision. But when my little Holmes book began also to do the circular tour I was hurt, for I knew that it deserved a better fate. James Payn applauded, but found it both too short and too long, which was true enough. Arrowsmith received it in May, 1886, and returned it unread in July. Two or three others sniffed and turned away. Finally, as Ward, Lock, and Co. made a speciality of cheap and often sensational literature, I sent it to them.

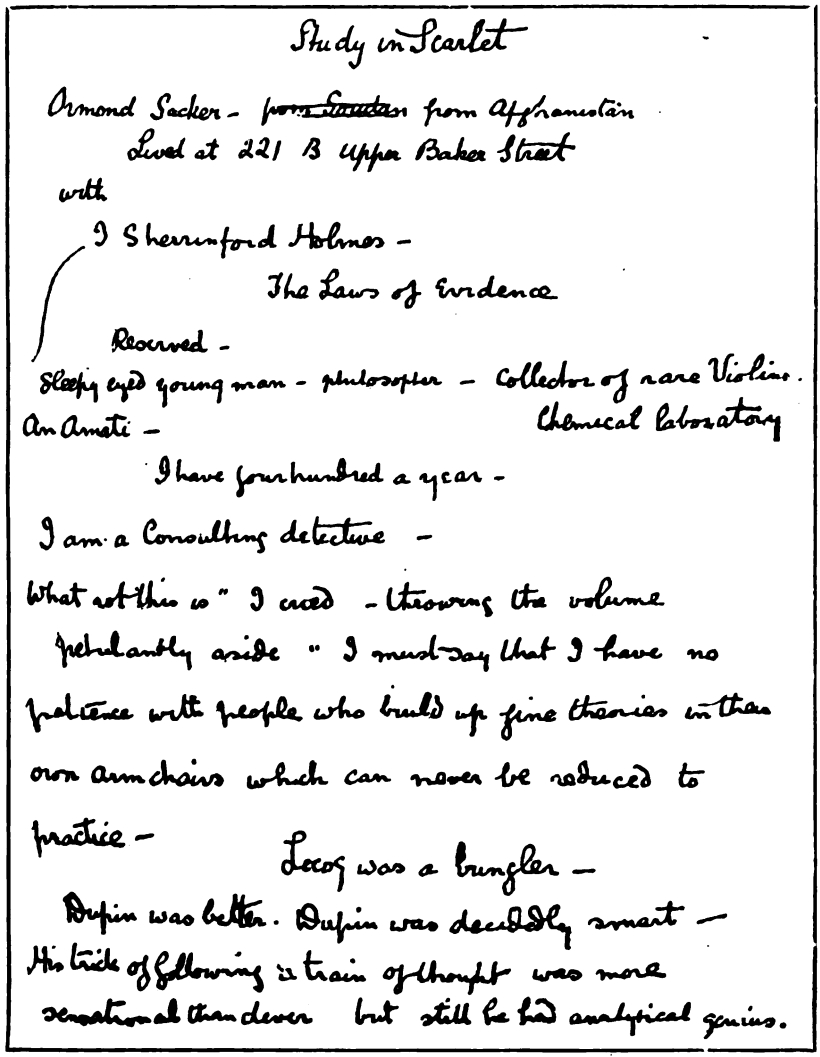
"*Dear Sir,*" *they said,*—"*We have read your story and are pleased with it. We could not publish it this year as the market is flooded at present with cheap fiction, but if you do not object to its being held over till next year, we will give you twenty-five pounds for the copyright.*

Yours faithfully,

WARD, LOCK, & Co.

Oct. 30th, 1886.

It was not a very tempting offer, and even I, poor as I was, hesitated to accept it. It was not merely the small sum offered, but it was the long delay, for this book might open a road for me. I was heart-sick, however, at repeated disappointments, and I felt that perhaps it was true wisdom


Study in Scarlet

Armond Sacker - ~~from Candahar~~ from Afghanistan
Lived at 221 B Upper Baker Street
with
1 Sherrinford Holmes -
The Laws of Evidence
Received -
Sleepy eyed young man - philosopher - Collector of rare Violins.
An Amati - Chemical laboratory
I have four hundred a year -
I am a Consulting detective -
What rot this is" I cried - throwing the volume
petulantly aside " I must say that I have no
patience with people who build up fine theories in their
own armchairs which can never be reduced to
practice - Lecoq was a bungler -
Dupin was better. Dupin was decidedly smart -
His trick of following a train of thought was more
sensational than clever but still he had analytical genius.

The page from Conan Doyle's notebook, showing the alternative names for Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, together with many other interesting memoranda.

to make sure of publicity, however late. Therefore I accepted, and the book became "Beeton's Xmas Annual" of 1887. I never at any time received another penny for it.

Having a long wait in front of me before this book could appear, and feeling large thoughts rise within me, I now determined to test my powers to the full, and I chose an historical novel for this end because it seemed to me the one way of combining a certain amount of literary dignity with those scenes of action and adventure which were natural to my young and ardent mind. I had always felt great sympathy for the Puritans, who, after all, whatever their little peculiarities, did represent political liberty and earnestness in religion. They had usually been caricatured in fiction and art. Even Scott had not drawn them as they were. Macaulay, who was always one of my chief inspirations, had alone made them comprehensible—the sombre fighters, with their Bibles and their broadswords. There is a great passage of his—I cannot quote it verbally—in which he says that after the Restoration, if ever you saw a carter more intelligent than his fellows, or a peasant who tilled his land better, you would be likely to find that it was an old pikeman of Cromwell's. This, then, was my inspiration in "Micah Clarke," where I fairly let myself go upon the broad highway of adventure. I was well up in history, but I spent some months over details and then wrote the book very rapidly. There are bits of it, the picture of the Puritan household and the sketch of Judge Jeffreys, which I have never bettered. When it was finished early in 1888 my hopes ran high and out it went on its travels.

ANDREW LANG AND "MICAH CLARKE."

But, alas, although my Holmes booklet was out, and had attracted some little favourable comment, the door still seemed to be barred. James Payn had first peep, and he began his letter of rejection with the sentence, "How can you, can you, waste your time and your wits writing historical novels?" This was depressing after a year of work. Then came Bentley's verdict: "It lacks, in our opinion, the one great necessary point for fiction, *i.e.*, interest; and this being the case we do not think it could ever become popular with libraries and the general public." Then Blackwood had its say: "There are imperfections which would militate against success. The chances of the book proving a popular success do not seem to be strong enough to warrant us in publishing it." There were others even more depressing. I was on the point of putting the worn manuscript into hospital with its mangled brother, "Girdlestone," when as a last resource I sent it to Longmans, whose reader, Andrew Lang, liked it and advised its acceptance. It was to "Andrew of the brindled hair," as Stevenson called him, that I owe my first real opening, and I have never forgotten it. The book duly appeared in February, 1889, and though it was not a boom book it had extraordinarily good reviews, including one special one all to itself by Mr. Protheroe in the *Nineteenth Century*, and it has sold without intermission from that day to this. It was the first solid corner-stone laid for some sort of literary reputation.

British literature had a considerable vogue in the United States at this time, for the simple reason that there was no copyright, and they had not to pay for it. It was hard on British authors, but far harder on American ones, since they were exposed to this devastating competition. Like all national sins, it brought its own punishment not only to American authors, who were guiltless, but to the publishers themselves, for what belongs to everyone belongs practically to no one, and they could not bring out a decent edition without being at once undersold. I have seen some of my early American editions which might have been printed on the paper that shopmen use for parcels. One good result, however, from my point of view, was that a British author, if he had anything in him, soon won recognition over there, and afterwards, when the Copyright Act was passed, he had his audience all ready for him. My Holmes book had met with some success over there, and presently I learned that an agent of Lippincott's was in London and that he wished to see me, to arrange for a book. Needless to say that I gave my patients a rest for a day and eagerly kept the appointment.

A "CORNHILL" DINNER.

Once only before had I touched the edge of literary society. That was when *Cornhill* was turned into a fully illustrated journal, an experiment which failed, for it was quickly abandoned. The change was celebrated by a dinner at the Ship at Greenwich, to which I was invited on the strength of my short contributions. All the authors and artists were there, and I remember the reverence with which I approached James Payn, who was to me the warden of the sacred gate. I was among the first arrivals, and was greeted by Mr. Smith, the head of the firm, who introduced me to Payn. I loved much of his work and waited in awe for the first weighty remark which should fall from his lips. It was that there was a

crack in the window and he wondered how the devil it had got there. Let me add, however, that my future experience was to show that there was no wittier or more delightful companion in the world. That night I sat next to Anstey, who had just made a most deserved hit with his "Vice Versâ," and I was introduced to other celebrities, so that I came back walking on air.

Now for the second time I was in London on literary business. Stoddart, the American, proved to be an excellent fellow, and had two others to dinner. They were Gill, a very entertaining Irish M.P., and Oscar Wilde, who was already famous as the champion of æstheticism. It was indeed a golden evening for me. Wilde, to my surprise, had read "Micah Clarke" and was enthusiastic about it, so that I did not feel a complete outsider. His conversation left an indelible impression upon my mind. He towered above us all, and yet had the art of seeming to be interested in all that we could say. He had delicacy of feeling and remember how, in discussing the wars of the future, he said: "A chemist on each side will approach the frontier with a bottle"—his upraised hand and grotesque picture. His anecdotes, too, were happy and curious. We were discussing the cynical maxim that the good fortune of our friends made us discontented. "The devil," said Wilde, "was once crossing the Libyan Desert, and he came upon a spot where a number of small fiends were tormenting a holy hermit. The sainted man easily shook off their evil suggestions. The devil watched their failure and then he stepped forward to give them a lesson. 'What you do is too crude,' said he. 'Permit me one moment.' With that he whispered to the holy man: 'Your brother has just been made Bishop of Alexandria.' A scowl of malignant jealousy at once clouded the serene face of the hermit. 'That,' said the devil to his imps, 'is the sort of thing which I should recommend.'"

The result of the evening was that both Wilde and I promised to write books for

"That," said the devil to his imps, "is the sort of thing which I should recommend."

tact, for the monologue man, however clever, can never be a gentleman at heart. He took as well as gave, but what he gave was unique. He had a curious precision of statement, a delicate flavour of humour, and a trick of small gestures to illustrate his meaning which were peculiar to himself. The effect cannot be reproduced, but I *Lippincott's Magazine*. Wilde's contribution was "The Picture of Dorian Gray," a book which is surely upon a high moral plane, while I wrote "The Sign of Four," in which Holmes made his second appearance. I should add that never in Wilde's conversation did I observe one trace of coarseness of thought, nor could one at that

time associate him with such an idea. Only once again did I see him, many years afterwards, and then he gave me the impression of being mad. He asked me, I remember, if I had seen some play of his which was running. I answered that I had not. He said: "Ah, you must go. It is wonderful. It is genius!" All this with the gravest face. Nothing could have been more different from his early gentlemanly instincts. I thought at the time, and still think, that the monstrous development which ruined him was pathological, and that a hospital rather than a police-court was the place for its consideration.

When his little book came out I wrote to say what I thought of it. His letter is worth reproducing, as showing the true Wilde. I omit the early part, in which he comments on my own work in too generous terms:—

> *"Between me and life there is a mist of words always. I throw probability out of the window for the sake of a phrase and the chance of an epigram makes me desert truth. Still I do aim at making a work of art, and I am really delighted that you think my treatment subtle and artistically good. The newspapers seem to me to be written by the prurient for the Philistine. I cannot understand how they can treat 'Dorian Gray' as immoral. My difficulty was to keep the inherent moral subordinate to the artistic and dramatic effect, and it still seems to me that the moral is too obvious."*

"THE MOST AMBITIOUS THING THAT I HAVE EVER DONE."

Encouraged by the kind reception which "Micah Clarke" had received from the critics, I now determined upon an even bolder and more ambitious flight. It seemed to me that the days of Edward the Third constituted the greatest epoch in English history—an epoch when both the French and the Scottish kings were prisoners in London. This result had been brought about mainly by the powers of a body of men who were renowned through Europe, but who had never been drawn in British literature, for though Scott treated in his inimitable way the English archer, it was as an outlaw rather than as a soldier that he drew him. I had some views of my own, too, about the Middle Ages which I was anxious to set forth. I was familiar with Froissart and Chaucer, and I was aware that the famous knights of old were by no means the athletic heroes of Scott, but were often of a very different type. Hence came my two books, "The White Company," written in 1889, and "Sir Nigel," written fourteen years later. Of the two I consider the latter the better book, but I have no hesitation in saying that the two of them taken together did thoroughly achieve my purpose, that they made an accurate picture of that great age, and that as a single piece of work they form the most complete, satisfying, and ambitious thing that I have ever done.

All things find their level, but I believe that if I had never touched Holmes, who has tended to obscure my higher work, my position in literature would at the present moment be a more favourable one. The work needed much research, and I have still got my notebooks and all sorts of lore. I cultivate a simple style and avoid long words so far as possible, and it may be that this surface of ease has sometimes caused the reader to underrate the amount of real research which lies in all my historical novels. It is not a matter which troubles me, however, for I have always felt that justice is done in the end, and that the real merit of any work is never permanently lost.

I remember that as I wrote the last words of "The White Company" I felt a wave of exultation, and with a cry of "That's done it!" I hurled my inky pen across the room, where it left a black smudge upon the duck's-egg wall-paper. I knew in my heart that the book would live and that it would illuminate our national traditions. Now that it has passed through fifty editions I suppose I may say with all modesty that my forecast has proved to be correct. This was the last book which I wrote in my days of doctoring at Southsea, and marks an epoch in my life, so I can now hark back to some other phases of my last years at Bush Villa before I broke away into a new existence. I will only add that "The White Company" was accepted by *Cornhill* in spite of James Payn's opinion of historical novels, and that I fulfilled another ambition by having a serial in that famous magazine.

In the Next Number

Sir A. Conan Doyle has many other interesting things to say about Sherlock Holmes, his appearance on the stage, and the consternation caused by the publication of "The Final Problem," in which he appeared to meet his death.

The instalment also contains a most diverting parody of a Sherlock Holmes story by Sir James Barrie.

THE LONG ARM of LOONEY COOTE

by

P.G.WODEHOUSE

ILLUSTRATED BY REGINALD CLEAVER

GIVEN private means sufficiently large to pad them against the moulding buffets of Life, it is extraordinary how little men change in after years from the boys they once were. There was a youth in my house at school named Coote. J. G. Coote. And he was popularly known as Looney on account of the vain and foolish superstitions which seemed to rule his every action. Boys are hard-headed, practical persons, and they have small tolerance for the view-point of one who declines to join in a quiet smoke behind the gymnasium not through any moral scruples—which, to do him justice, he would have scorned—but purely on the ground that he had seen a magpie that morning. This was what J. G. Coote did, and it was the first occasion on which I remember him being addressed as Looney.

But, once given, the nickname stuck; and this in spite of the fact—seeing that we were caught half-way through the first cigarette and forcefully dealt with by a muscular head master—that that magpie of his would appear to have known a thing or two. For five happy years, till we parted to go to our respective universities, I never called Coote anything but Looney; and it was as Looney that I greeted him when we happened upon each other one afternoon at Sandown, shortly after the conclusion of the three o'clock race.

"Did you do anything on that one?"

Copyright, 1923, by P. G. Wodehouse.

I asked, after we had exchanged salutations.

"I went down," replied Looney, in the subdued but not heart-broken manner of the plutocrat who can afford to do these things. "I had a tenner on My Valet."

"On My Valet!" I cried, aghast at this inexplicable patronage of an animal which, even in the preliminary saunter round the paddock, had shown symptoms of lethargy and fatigue, not to mention a disposition to trip over his feet. "Whatever made you do that?"

"Yes, I suppose he never had a chance," agreed Coote, "but a week ago my man Spencer broke his leg, and I thought it might be an omen."

And then I knew that, for all his moustache and added weight, he was still the old Looney of my boyhood.

"Is that the principle on which you always bet?" I inquired.

"Well, you'd be surprised how often it works. The day my aunt was shut up in the private asylum I collected five hundred quid by backing Crazy Jane for the Jubilee Cup. Have a cigarette?"

"Thanks."

"Oh, my Lord!"

"Now what?"

"My pocket has been picked," faltered Looney Coote, withdrawing a trembling hand. "I had a note-case with nearly a hundred quid, and it's gone!"

The next moment I was astounded to observe a faint, resigned smile on the man's face.

"Well, that makes two," he murmured, as if to himself.

"Two what?"

"Two misfortunes. These things always go in threes, you know. Whenever anything rotten happens, I simply brace myself up for the other two things. Well, there's only one more to come this time, thank goodness."

"What was the first one?"

"I told you my man Spencer broke his leg."

"I should have thought that would have ranked as one of Spencer's three misfortunes. How do you come in?"

"Why, my dear fellow, I've been having the devil of a time since he dropped out. The ass they sent me from the agency as a substitute is no good at all. Look at that!" He extended a shapely leg. "Do you call that a crease?"

From the humble standpoint of my own bagginess, I should have called it an excellent crease, but he seemed thoroughly dissatisfied with it, so there was nothing to do but tell him to set his teeth and bear it like a man, and presently, the bell having rung for the three-thirty race, we parted.

"Oh, by the way," said Looney, as he left me, "are you going to be at the Old Wrykinian dinner next week?"

"Yes, I'm coming. So is Ukridge."

"Ukridge? Good Lord, I haven't seen old Ukridge for years."

"Well, he will be there. And I expect he'll touch you for a temporary loan. That will make your third misfortune."

Ukridge's decision to attend the annual dinner of the Old Boys of the school at which he and I had been—in a manner of speaking—educated had come as a surprise to me; for, though the meal was likely to be well-cooked and sustaining, the tickets cost half a sovereign apiece, and it was required of the celebrants that they wear evening-dress. And, while Ukridge sometimes possessed ten shillings which he had acquired by pawning a dress-suit, or a dress-suit which he had hired for ten shillings, it was unusual for him to have the two things together. Still, he was as good as his word, and on the night of the banquet turned up at my lodgings for a preliminary bracer faultlessly clad and ready for the feast.

Tactlessly, perhaps, I asked him what bank he had been robbing.

"I thought you told me a week ago that money was tight," I said.

"It was tighter," said Ukridge, "than these damned trousers. Never buy ready-made dress-clothes, Corky, my boy. They're always unsatisfactory. But all that's over now. I have turned the corner, old man. Last Saturday we cleaned up to an extraordinary extent at Sandown."

"We?"

"The firm. I told you I had become a sleeping-partner in a bookie's business."

"For Heaven's sake! You don't mean to say that it is really making money?"

"Making money? My dear old lad, how could it help making money? I told you from the first the thing was a gold-mine. Affluence stares me in the eyeball. The day before yesterday I bought half-a-dozen shirts. That'll show you!"

"How much have you made?"

"In some ways," said Ukridge, sentimentally, "I regret this prosperity. I mean to say, those old careless impecunious days were not so bad. Not so bad, Corky, old boy, eh? Life had a tang then. It was swift, vivid, interesting. And there's always the danger that one may allow oneself to grow slack and enervated with wealth. Still, it has its compensations. Yes, on the whole I am not sorry to have made my pile."

"How much have you made?" I asked again, impressed by this time. The fact of Ukridge buying shirts for himself instead

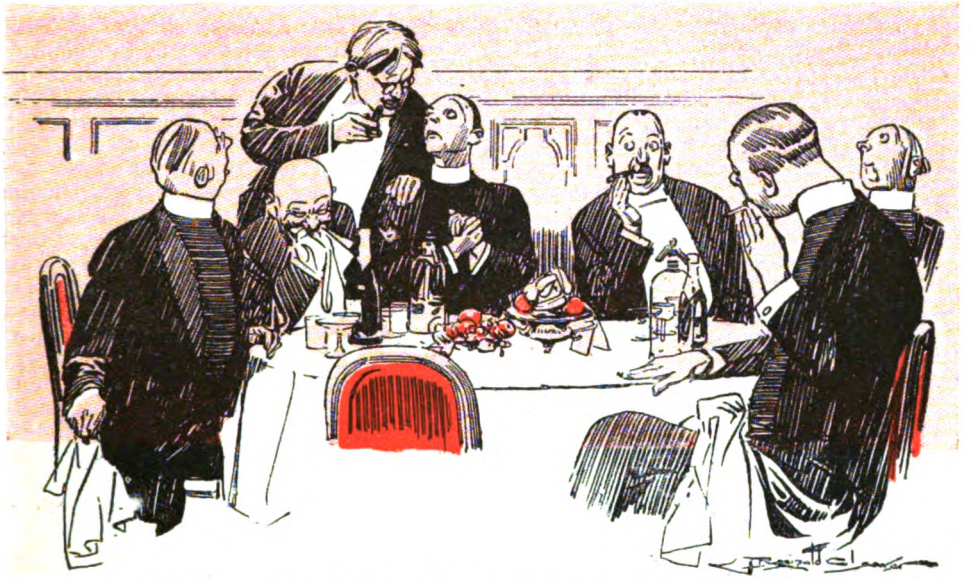
of purloining mine suggested an almost Monte Cristo-like opulence.

"Fifteen quid," said Ukridge. "Fifteen golden sovereigns, my boy! And out of one week's racing! And you must remember that the thing is going on all the year round. Month by month, week by week, we shall expand, we shall unfold, we shall develop. It wouldn't be a bad scheme, old man, to drop a judicious word here and there among the lads at this dinner to-night, advising them to lodge their commissions with us. Isaac O'Brien is the name of the firm, 3, Blue Street, St. James's. Telegraphic address, 'Ikobee, London,' and our representative attends all the recognized meetings. But don't mention my connection with the firm. I don't want it generally known, as it might impair my social standing. And now, laddie, if we don't want to be late for this binge, we had better be starting."

Ukridge, as I have recorded elsewhere, had left school under something of a cloud. Not to put too fine a point on it, he had been expelled for breaking out at night to attend the local fair, and it was only after many years of cold exclusion that he had been admitted to the pure-minded membership of the Old Boys' Society.

Nevertheless, in the matter of patriotism he yielded to no one.

During our drive to the restaurant where the dinner was to be held he grew more and more sentimental about the dear old school, and by the time the meal was over and the speeches began he was in the mood when men shed tears and invite people, to avoid whom in calmer moments they would duck down side-streets, to go on long walking tours with them. He wandered from table to table with a large cigar in his mouth, now exchanging reminiscences, anon



Ukridge wandered from table to table exchanging reminiscences.

advising contemporaries who had won high positions in the Church to place their bets with Isaac O'Brien of 3, Blue Street, St. James's—a sound and trustworthy firm, telegraphic address "Ikobee, London."

The speeches at these dinners always opened with a long and statistical harangue from the President, who, furtively consulting his paper of notes, announced the various distinctions gained by Old Boys during the past year. On this occasion, accordingly, he began by mentioning that A. B. Bodger ("Good old Bodger!"—from Ukridge) had been awarded the Mutt-Spivis Gold Medal for Geological Research at Oxford University—that C. D. Codger had been appointed to the sub-junior deanery of Westchester Cathedral—("That's the stuff, Codger, old horse!")—that as a reward for his services in connection with the building of the new waterworks at Strelsau J. J. Swodger had received from the Government of Ruritania the Order of the Silver Trowel, third class (with crossed pickaxes).

"By the way," said the President, concluding, "before I finish there is one more thing I would like to say. An old boy, B. V. Lawlor, is standing for Parliament

next week at Redbridge. If any of you would care to go down and lend him a hand, I know he would be glad of your help."

He resumed his seat, and the leather-lunged toastmaster behind him emitted a raucous "My Lord, Mr. President, and gentlemen, pray silence for Mr. H. K. Hodger, who will propose the health of 'The Visitors.'" H. K. Hodger rose with the purposeful expression only to be seen on the face of one who has been reminded by the remarks of the last speaker of the story of the two Irishmen; and the company, cosily replete, settled down to give him an indulgent attention.

Not so Ukridge. He was staring emotionally across the table at his old friend Lawlor. The seating arrangements at these dinners were usually designed to bring contemporaries together at the same table, and the future member for Redbridge was one of our platoon.

"Boko, old horse," demanded Ukridge, "is this true?"

A handsome but rather prominent nose had led his little playmates to bestow this affectionate sobriquet upon the coming M.P. It was one of those boyish handicaps which are never lived down, but I would not have thought of addressing B. V. Lawlor in this fashion myself, for, though he was a man of my own age, the years had made him extremely dignified. Ukridge, however, was above any such weakness. He gave out the offensive word in a vinous bellow of such a calibre as to cause H. K. Hodger to trip over a "begorra" and lose the drift of his story.

"'Sh!" said the President, bending a reproving gaze at our table.

"'Sh!" said B. V. Lawlor, contorting his smooth face.

"Yes, but is it?" persisted Ukridge.

"Of course it is," whispered Lawlor. "Be quiet!"

"Then, damme," shouted Ukridge, "rely on me, young Boko. I shall be at your side. I shall spare no efforts to pull you through. You can count on me to——"

"Really! Please! At that table down there," said the President, rising, while H. K. Hodger, who had got as far as "Then, faith and begob, it's me that'll be afther——" paused in a pained manner and plucked at the table-cloth.

Ukridge subsided. But his offer of assistance was no passing whim, to be lightly forgotten in the slumbers of the night. I was still in bed a few mornings later when he burst in, equipped for travel to the last button and carrying a seedy suit-case.

"Just off, laddie, just off!"

"Fine!" I said. "Good-bye."

"Corky, my boy," boomed Ukridge, sitting creakingly on the bed and poisoning the air with his noisome tobacco, "I feel happy this morning. Stimulated. And why? Because I am doing an altruistic action. We busy men of affairs, Corky, are too apt to exclude altruism from our lives. We are too prone to say 'What is there in it for me?' and, if there proves on investigation to be nothing in it for us, to give it the miss-in-baulk. That is why this business makes me so confoundedly happy. At considerable expense and inconvenience I am going down to Redbridge to-day, and what is there in it for me? Nothing. Nothing, my boy, except the pure delight of helping an old schoolfellow over a tough spot. If I can do anything, however little, to bring young Boko in at the right end of the poll, that will be enough reward for me. I am going to do my bit, Corky, and it may be that my bit will turn out to be just the trifle that brings home the bacon. I shall go down there and talk——"

"I bet you will."

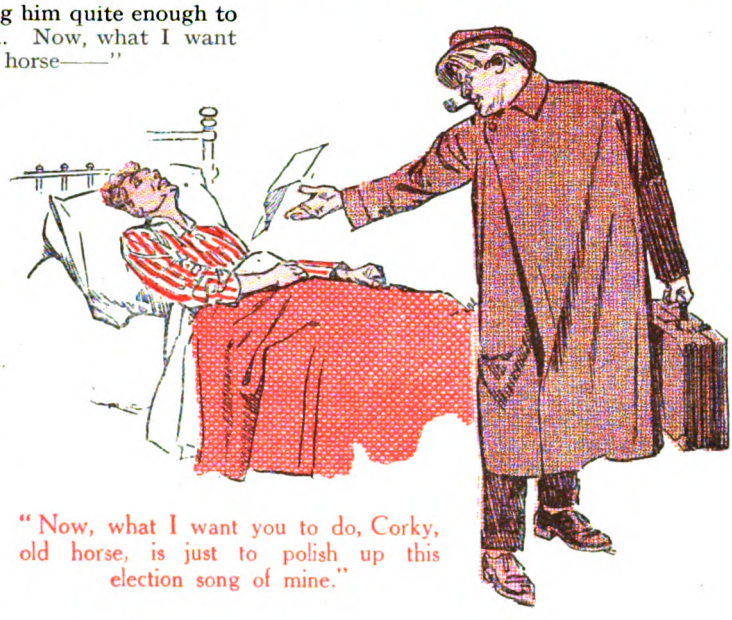
"Rely on me, young Boko," shouted Ukridge. "I shall spare no efforts to pull you through."

"I don't know much about politics, it's true, but I can bone up enough to get by. Invective ought to meet the case, and I'm pretty good at invective. I know the sort of thing. You accuse the rival candidate of every low act under

the sun, without giving him quite enough to start a libel action on. Now, what I want you to do, Corky, old horse——"

"Oh, heavens!" I moaned at these familiar words.

"—— is just to polish up this election song of mine. I sat up half the night writing it, but I can see it limps in spots. You can put it right in half an hour. Polish it up, laddie, and forward without fail to the Bull Hotel, Redbridge, this afternoon. It may just be the means of shoving Boko past the post by a nose."



"Now, what I want you to do, Corky, old horse, is just to polish up this election song of mine."

He clattered out hurriedly; and, sleep being now impossible, I picked up the sheet of paper he had left and read the verses.

They were well meant, but that let them out. Ukridge was no poet or he would never have attempted to rhyme "Lawlor" with "before us."

A rather neat phrase happening to occur to me at the breakfast table, coincident with the reflection that possibly Ukridge was right and it did behove his old schoolfellows to rally round the candidate, I spent the morning turning out a new ballad. Having finished this by noon, I dispatched it to the Bull Hotel, and went off to lunch with something of that feeling of satisfaction which, as Ukridge had pointed out, does come to altruists. I was strolling down Piccadilly, enjoying an after-luncheon smoke, when I ran into Looney Coote.

On Looney's amiable face there was a mingled expression of chagrin and satisfaction.

"It's happened," he said.

"What?"

"The third misfortune. I told you it would."

"What's the trouble now? Has Spencer broken his other leg?"

"My car has been stolen."

A decent sympathy would no doubt have become me, but from earliest years I had always found it difficult to resist the temptation to be airy and jocose when dealing with Looney Coote. The man was so indecently rich that he had no right to have troubles.

"Oh, well," I said, "you can easily get another. Fords cost practically nothing nowadays."

"It wasn't a Ford," bleated Looney, outraged. "It was a brand-new Winchester-Murphy. I paid fifteen hundred pounds for it only a month ago, and now it's gone."

"Where did you see it last?"

"I didn't see it last. My chauffeur brought it round to my rooms this morning, and, instead of staying with it as he should have done till I was ready, went off round the corner for a cup of coffee, so he says! And when he came back it had vanished."

"The coffee?"

"The car, you ass. The car had disappeared. It had been stolen."

"I suppose you have notified the police?"

"I'm on my way to Scotland Yard now. It just occurred to me. Have you any idea what the procedure is? It's the first time I've been mixed up with this sort of thing."

"You give them the number of the car, and they send out word to police-stations all over the country to look out for it."

"I see," said Looney Coote, brightening. "That sounds rather promising, what? I mean, it looks as if someone would be bound to spot it sooner or later."

"Yes," I said. "Of course, the first thing a thief would do would be to take off the number-plate and substitute a false one."

"Oh, Great Scott! Not really?"

"And after that he would paint the car a different colour."

"Oh, I say!"

"Still, the police generally manage to find them in the end. Years hence they will come on it in an old barn with the tonneau stoved in and the engines taken out. Then they will hand it back to you and claim the reward. But, as a matter of fact, what you ought to be praying is that you may never get it back. Then the thing would be a real misfortune. If you get it back as good as new in the next couple of days, it won't be a misfortune at all, and you will have number three hanging over your head again, just as before. And who knows what that third misfortune may be? In a way, you're tempting Providence by applying to Scotland Yard."

"Yes," said Looney Coote, doubtfully. "All the same, I think I will, don't you know. I mean to say, after all, a fifteen-hundred-quid Winchester-Murphy *is* a fifteen-hundred-quid Winchester-Murphy, if you come right down to it, what?"

Showing that even in the most superstitious there may be grains of hard, practical common sense lurking somewhere.

It had not been my intention originally to take any part in the by-election in the Redbridge division beyond writing three verses of a hymn in praise of Boko Lawlor and sending him a congratulatory wire if he won. But two things combined to make me change my mind. The first was the fact that it occurred to me—always the keen young journalist—that there might be a couple of guineas of *Interesting Bits* money in it ("How a Modern Election is Fought: Humours of the Poll"); the second, that, ever since his departure, Ukridge had been sending me a constant stream of telegrams so stimulating that eventually they lit the spark.

I append specimens:—

"*Going strong. Made three speeches yesterday. Election song a sensation. Come on down.*—UKRIDGE."

"*Boko locally regarded as walk-over. Made four speeches yesterday. Election song a breeze. Come on down.*—UKRIDGE."

"*Victory in sight. Spoke practically all yesterday. Election song a riot. Children croon it in cots. Come on down.*—UKRIDGE."

I leave it to any young author to say whether a man with one solitary political lyric to his credit could have resisted this. With the exception of a single music-hall song ("Mother, She's Pinching My Leg," tried out by Tim Sims, the Koy Komic, at the Peebles Hippodrome, and discarded, in response to a popular appeal, after one performance), no written words of mine had ever passed human lips. Naturally, it gave me a certain thrill to imagine the enlightened electorate of Redbridge—at any rate, the right-thinking portion of it—bellowing in its thousands those noble lines:—

"*No foreign foe's insidious hate*
Our country shall o'erwhelm
So long as England's ship of state
Has LAWLOR at the helm."

Whether I was technically correct in describing as guiding the ship of state a man who would probably spend his entire Parliamentary career in total silence, voting meekly as the Whip directed, I had not stopped to inquire. All I knew was that it sounded well, and I wanted to hear it. In addition to which, there was the opportunity, never likely to occur again, of seeing Ukridge make an ass of himself before a large audience.

I went to Redbridge.

The first thing I saw on leaving the station was a very large poster exhibiting Boko Lawlor's expressive features, bearing the legend:—

LAWLOR
FOR
REDBRIDGE.

This was all right, but immediately beside it, evidently placed there by the hand of an enemy, was a still larger caricature of this poster which stressed my old friend's prominent nose in a manner that seemed to me to go beyond the limits of a fair debate. To this was appended the words:—

DO YOU
WANT
THIS
FOR A MEMBER?

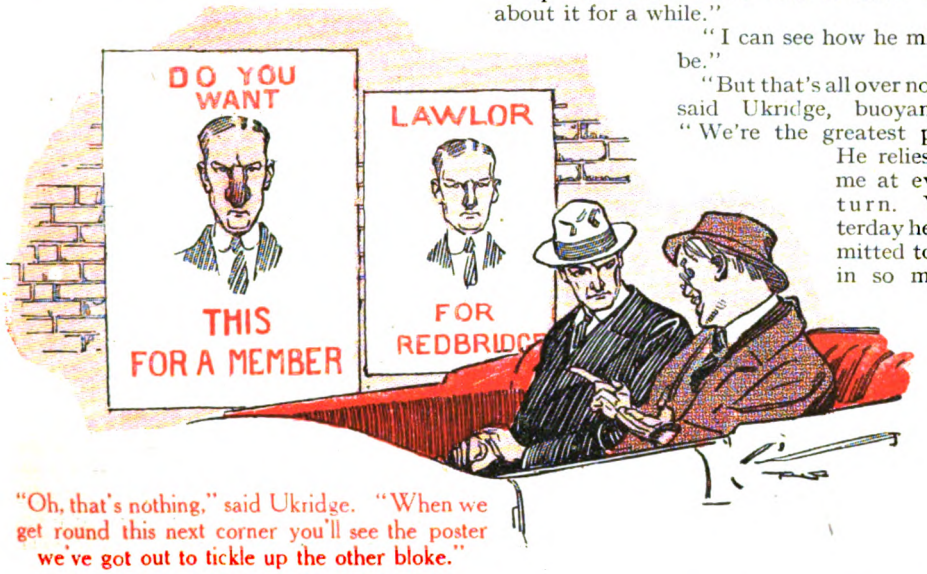
To which, if I had been a hesitating voter of the constituency, I would certainly have replied "No!" for there was something about that grossly elongated nose that convicted the man beyond hope of appeal of every undesirable quality a member of Parliament can possess. You could see at a glance that here was one who, if elected, would do his underhand best to cut down the Navy, tax the poor man's food, and strike a series of blows at the very root of the home. And, as if this were not enough, a few yards farther on was a placard covering almost the entire side of a house, which said in simple, straightforward black letters a foot high:—

DOWN WITH
BOKO,
THE HUMAN GARGOYLE.

How my poor old contemporary, after passing a week in the constant society of

these slurs on his personal appearance, could endure to look himself in the face in his shaving-mirror of a morning was more than I could see. I commented on this to Ukridge, who had met me at the station in a luxurious car.

"Oh, that's nothing," said Ukridge, huskily. The first thing I had noticed about him was that his vocal cords had been putting in overtime since our last meeting. "Just the usual give-and-take



"Oh, that's nothing," said Ukridge. "When we get round this next corner you'll see the poster we've got out to tickle up the other bloke."

of an election. When we get round this next corner you'll see the poster we've got out to tickle up the other bloke. It's a pippin."

I did, and it was indeed a pippin. After one glance at it as we rolled by, I could not but feel that the electors of Redbridge were in an uncommonly awkward position, having to choose between Boko, as exhibited in the street we had just passed, and this horror now before me. Mr. Herbert Huxtable, the opposition candidate, seemed to run as generously to ears as his adversary did to nose, and the artist had not overlooked this feature. Indeed, except for a mean, narrow face with close-set eyes and a murderer's mouth, Mr. Huxtable appeared to be all ears. They drooped and flapped about him like carpet-bags, and I averted my gaze, appalled.

"Do you mean to say you're *allowed* to do this sort of thing?" I asked, incredulously.

"My dear old horse, it's expected of you. It's a mere formality. The other side would feel awkward and disappointed if you didn't."

"And how did they find out about Lawlor being called Boko?" I inquired, for the point had puzzled me. In a way, you might say that it was the only thing you could possibly call him, but the explanation hardly satisfied me.

"That," admitted Ukridge, "was largely my fault. I was a bit carried away the first time I addressed the multitude, and I happened to allude to the old chap by his nickname. Of course, the opposition took it up at once. Boko was a little sore about it for a while."

"I can see how he might be."

"But that's all over now," said Ukridge, buoyantly. "We're the greatest pals. He relies on me at every turn. Yesterday he admitted to me in so many words that if he gets in it'll be owing to my help as much as anything. The fact is, laddie, I've made rather a hit with the manyheaded. They seem to like to hear me speak."

"Fond of a laugh, eh?"

"Now, laddie," said Ukridge, reprovingly, "this is not the right tone. You must curb that spirit of levity while you're down here. This is a dashed serious business, Corky, old man, and the sooner you realize it the better. If you have come here to gibe and to mock——"

"I came to hear my election song sung. When do they sing it?"

"Oh, practically all the time. Incessantly, you might say."

"In their baths?"

"Most of the voters here don't take baths. You'll gather that when we reach Biscuit Row."

"What's Biscuit Row?"

"It's the quarter of the town where the blokes live who work in Fitch and Weyman's Biscuit Factory, laddie. It's what you might call," said Ukridge, importantly, "the doubtful element of the place. All the rest of the town is nice and clean-cut,

they're either solid for Boko or nuts on Huxtable—but these biscuit blokes are wobbly. That's why we have to canvass them so carefully."

"Oh, you're going canvassing, are you?"

"*We* are," corrected Ukridge.

"Not me!"

"Corky," said Ukridge, firmly, "pull yourself together. It was principally to assist me in canvassing these biscuit blighters that I got you down here. Where's your patriotism, laddie? Don't you want old Boko to get into Parliament, or what is it? We must strain every nerve. We must set our hands to the plough. The job you've got to tackle is the baby-kissing——"

"I won't kiss their infernal babies!"

"You will, old horse, unless you mean to spend the rest of your life cursing yourself vainly when it is too late that poor old Boko got pipped on the tape purely on account of your poltroonery. Consider, old man! Have some vision! Be an altruist! It may be that your efforts will prove the deciding factor in this desperately close-run race."

"What do you mean, desperately close-run race? You said in your wire that it was a walk-over for Boko."

"That was just to fool the telegraph-bloke, whom I suspect of being in the enemy camp. As a matter of fact, between ourselves, it's touch and go. A trifle either way will do the business now."

"Why don't *you* kiss these beastly babies?"

"There's something about me that scares 'em, laddie. I've tried it once or twice, but only alienated several valuable voters by frightening their offspring into a nervous collapse. I think it's my glasses they don't like. But you—now, you," said Ukridge, with revolting fulsomeness, "are an ideal baby-kisser. The first time I ever saw you, I said: 'There goes one of Nature's baby-kissers.' Directly I started to canvass these people and realized what I was up against, I thought of you. 'Corky's the man,' I said to myself; 'the fellow we want is old Corky. Good-looking. And not merely good-looking but *kind*-looking.' They'll take to you, laddie. Yours is a face a baby can trust——"

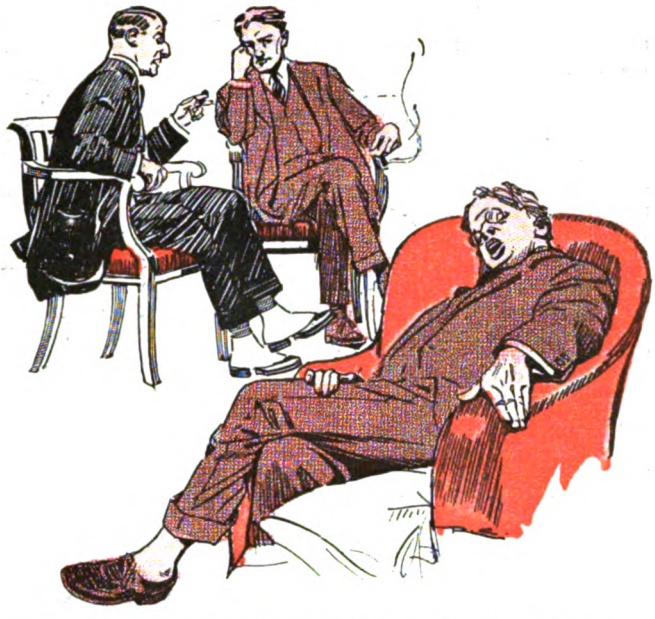
"Now, listen!"

"And it won't last long. Just a couple of streets and we're through. So stiffen your backbone, laddie, and go at it like a man. Boko is going to entertain you with a magnificent banquet at his hotel to-night. I happen to know there will be champagne. Keep your mind fixed on that and the thing will seem easy."

The whole question of canvassing is one which I would like some time to go into at length. I consider it to be an altogether abominable practice. An Englishman's home is his castle, and it seems to me

They looked at me with lowering brows, and snatched their babies away from me.

intolerable that, just as you have got into shirt-sleeves and settled down to a soothing pipe, total strangers should be permitted to force their way in and bother you with their nauseous flattery and their impertinent curiosity as to which way you mean to vote. And, while I prefer not to speak at length of my experiences in Biscuit Row, I must say this much, that practically every resident of that dingy quarter appeared to see eye to eye with me in this matter. I have never encountered a body of men who were consistently less chummy. They looked at me with lowering brows, they answered my limping civilities with gruff monosyllables, they snatched their babies away from me and hid them, yelling, in distant parts of the house. Altogether a most discouraging experience, I should have said, and one which seemed to indicate that, as far as Biscuit Row was concerned, Boko Lawlor would score a blank at the poll.



Lawlor cast an apprehensive eye at the sleeping figure.

Ukridge scoffed at this gloomy theory.

"My dear old horse," he cried, exuberantly, as the door of the last house slammed behind us and I revealed to him the inferences I had drawn, "you mustn't mind that. It's just their way. They treat everybody the same. Why, one of Huxtable's fellows got his hat smashed in at that very house we've just left. I consider the outlook highly promising, laddie."

And so, to my surprise, did the candidate himself. When we had finished dinner that night and were talking over our cigars, while Ukridge slumbered noisily in an easy chair, Boko Lawler spoke with a husky confidence of his prospects.

"And, curiously enough," said Boko, endorsing what until then I had looked on as mere idle swank on Ukridge's part, "the fellow who will have really helped me more than anybody else, if I get in, is old Ukridge. He borders, perhaps, a trifle too closely on the libellous in his speeches, but he certainly has the knack of talking to an audience. In the past week he has made himself quite a prominent figure in Redbridge. In fact, I'm bound to say it has made me a little nervous at times, this prominence of his. I know what an erratic fellow he is, and if he were to become the centre of some horrible scandal it would mean defeat for a certainty."

"How do you mean, scandal?"

"I sometimes conjure up a dreadful vision," said Boko Lawlor, with a slight shudder, "of one of his creditors suddenly rising in the audience and denouncing him for not having paid for a pair of trousers or something."

He cast an apprehensive eye at the sleeping figure.

"You're all right if he keeps on wearing that suit," I said, soothingly, "because it happens to be one he sneaked from me. I have been wondering why it was so familiar."

"Well, anyhow," said Boko, with determined optimism, "I suppose, if anything like that was going to happen, it would have happened before. He has been addressing meetings all the week, and nothing has occurred. I'm going to let him open the ball at our last rally to-morrow night. He has a way of warming up the audience. You'll come to that, of course?"

"If I am to see Ukridge warming up an audience, nothing shall keep me away."

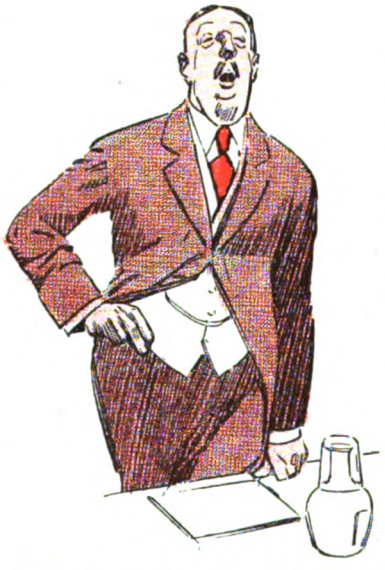
"I'll see that you get a seat on the platform. It will be the biggest affair we have had. The polling takes place on the next day, and this will be our last chance of swaying the doubters."

"I didn't know doubters ever came to these meetings. I thought the audience was always solid for the speakers."

"It may be so in some constituencies," said Boko, moodily, "but it certainly isn't at Redbridge."

The monster meeting in support of Boko Lawlor's candidature was held at that popular eyesore, the Associated Mechanics' Hall. As I sat among the elect on the platform, waiting for the proceedings to commence, there came up to me a mixed scent of dust, clothes, orange-peel, chalk, wood, plaster, pomade, and Associated Mechanics—the whole forming a mixture which, I began to see, was likely to prove too rich for me. I changed my seat in order to bring myself next to a small but promising-looking door, through which it would be possible, if necessary, to withdraw without being noticed.

The principle on which chairmen at these meetings are selected is perhaps too familiar to require recording here at length, but in case some of my readers are not acquainted with the workings of political machines, I may say that no one under the age of eighty-five is eligible and the preference is given to those with adenoids. For Boko Lawlor the authorities had extended themselves and picked a champion of his class. In addition to adenoids, the Right Hon. the Marquess of Cricklewood had — or seemed to have — a potato of the maximum size and hotness in his mouth, and he had learned his elocution in one of those correspondence schools which teach it by mail. I caught his first sentence—that he would only detain us a moment—but for fifteen minutes after that he baffled me completely. That he was still speaking I could tell by the way his Adam's apple wiggled, but what he was saying I could not even guess. And presently, the door at my side offering its silent invitation, I slid softly through and closed it behind me.



That he was still speaking I could tell by the way his Adam's apple wiggled, but what he was saying I could not even guess.

Except for the fact that I was now out of sight of the chairman, I did not seem to have bettered my position greatly. The scenic effects of the hall had not been alluring, but there was nothing much more enlivening to look at here. I found myself in a stone-flagged corridor with walls of an unhealthy green, ending in a flight of stairs. I was just about to proceed towards these in a casual spirit of exploration, when footsteps made themselves heard, and in another moment a helmet loomed into view, followed by a red face, a blue uniform, and large, stout boots—making in all one constable, who proceeded along the corridor towards me with a measured step as if pacing a beat. I thought his face looked stern and disapproving, and attributed it to the fact that I had just lighted a cigarette—presumably in a place where smoking was not encouraged. I dropped the cigarette and placed a guilty heel on it—an action which I regretted the next moment, when the constable himself produced one from the recesses of his tunic and asked me for a match.

"Not allowed to smoke on duty," he said, affably, "but there's no harm in a puff."

I saw now that what I had taken for a stern and disapproving look was merely the official mask. I agreed that no possible harm could come of a puff.

"Meeting started?" inquired the officer, jerking his head towards the door.

"Yes. The chairman was making a few remarks when I came out."

"Ah! Better give it time to warm up," he said, cryptically. And there was a restful silence for some minutes while the scent of a cigarette of small price competed with the other odours of the corridor.

Presently, however, the stillness was interrupted. From the unseen hall came the faint clapping of hands, and then a burst of melody. I started. It was impossible to distinguish the words, but surely there was no mistaking that virile rhythm :—

"Tum tumty tumty tumty tum,
Tum tumty tumty tum,
Tum tumty tumty tumty tum,
Tum TUMTY tumty tum."

It was! It must be! I glowed all over with modest pride.

"That's mine," I said, with attempted nonchalance.

"Ur?" queried the constable, who had fallen into a reverie.

"That thing they're singing. Mine. My election song."

It seemed to me that the officer regarded me strangely. It may have been admiration,

but it looked more like disappointment and disfavour.

"You on this Lawlor's side?" he demanded, heavily.

"Yes. I wrote his election song. They're singing it now."

"I'm opposed to 'im *in toto* and root and branch," said the constable, emphatically. "I don't like 'is views—subversive, that's what I call 'em. Subversive."

There seemed nothing to say to this. This divergence of opinion was unfortunate, but there it was. After all, there was no reason why political differences should have to interfere with what had all the appearance of being the dawning of a beautiful friendship. Pass over it lightly, that was the tactful course. I endeavoured to steer the conversation gently back to less debatable grounds.

"This is my first visit to Redbridge," I said, chattily.

"Ur?" said the constable, but I could see that he was not interested. He finished his cigarette with three rapid puffs and stamped it out And as he did so a strange, purposeful tenseness seemed to come over him. His boiled-fish eyes seemed to say that the time of dalliance was now ended and constabulary duty was to be done. "Is that the way to the platform, mister?" he asked, indicating my door with a jerk of the helmet.

I cannot say why it was, but at this moment a sudden foreboding swept over me.

"Why do you want to go on the platform?" I asked, apprehensively.

There was no doubt about the disfavour with which he regarded me now. So frigid was his glance that I backed against the door in some alarm.

"Never you mind," he said, severely, "why I want to go on that platform. If you really want to know," he continued, with that slight inconsistency which marks great minds, "I'm goin' there to arrest a feller."

It was perhaps a little uncomplimentary to Ukridge that I should so instantly have leaped to the certainty that, if anybody on a platform on which he sat was in danger of arrest, he must be the man. There were at least twenty other earnest supporters of Boko grouped behind the chairman beyond that door, but it never even occurred to me as a possibility that it could be one of these on whom the hand of the law proposed to descend. And a moment later my instinct was proved to be unerring. The singing had ceased, and now a stentorian voice had begun to fill all space. It spoke, was interrupted by a roar of laughter, and began to speak again.

"That's 'im," said the constable, briefly.

"There must be some mistake," I said. "That is my friend, Mr. Ukridge."

"I don't know 'is name and I don't care about 'is name," said the constable, sternly. "But if 'e's the big feller with glasses that's stayin' at the Bull, that's the man I'm after. He may be a 'ighly 'umorous and diverting orator," said the constable, bitterly, as another happy burst of laughter greeted what was presumably a further sally at the expense of the side which enjoyed his support, "but, be that as it may, 'e's got to come along with me to the station and explain how 'e 'appens to be in possession of a stolen car that there's been an inquiry sent out from 'eadquarters about."

My heart turned to water. A light had flashed upon me.

"Car?" I quavered.

"Car," said the constable.

"Was it a gentleman named Coote who lodged the complaint about his car being stolen? Because——"

"I don't——"

"Because, if so, there has been a mistake. Mr. Ukridge is a personal friend of Mr. Coote, and——"

"I don't know whose name it is's car's been stolen," said the constable, elliptically. "All I know is, there's been an inquiry sent out, and this feller's got it."

At this point something hard dug into the small of my back as I pressed against the door. I stole a hand round behind me, and my fingers closed upon a key. The policeman was stooping to retrieve a dropped notebook. I turned the key softly and pocketed it.

"If you would kindly not object to standing back a bit and giving a feller a chance to get at that door," said the policeman, straightening himself. He conducted experiments with the handle. "'Ere, it's locked!"

"Is it?" I said. "Is it?"

"'Ow did you get out through this door if it's locked?"

"It wasn't locked when I came through."

He eyed me with dull suspicion for a moment, then knocked imperatively with a large red knuckle.

"Shush! Shush!" came a scandalized whisper through the keyhole.

"Never you mind about 'Shush! Shush!'" said the constable, with asperity. "You open this door, that's what you do." And he substituted for the knuckle a leg-of-mutton-like fist. The sound of his banging boomed through the corridor like distant thunder.

"Really, you know," I protested, "you're disturbing the meeting."

"I *want* to disturb the meeting," replied this strong but not silent man, casting a

cold look over his shoulder. And the next instant, to prove that he was as ready with deeds as with words, he backed a foot or two, lifted a huge and weighty foot, and kicked.

For all ordinary purposes the builder of the Associated Mechanics' Hall had done his work adequately, but he had never suspected that an emergency might arise which would bring his doors into competition with a policeman's foot. Any lesser maltreatment the lock might have withstood, but against this it was powerless. With a sharp sound like the cry of one registering a formal protest the door gave way. It swung back, showing a vista of startled faces beyond. Whether or not the noise had reached the audience in the body of the hall I did not know, but it had certainly impressed the little group on the platform. I had a swift glimpse of forms hurrying to the centre of the disturbance, of the chairman gaping like a surprised sheep, of Ukridge glowering; and then the constable blocked out my view as he marched forward over the *débris*.

A moment later there was no doubt as to whether the audience was interested. A confused uproar broke out in every corner of the hall, and, hurrying on to the platform, I perceived that the hand of the Law had fallen. It was grasping Ukridge's shoulder in a weighty grip in the sight of all men.

There was just one instant before the tumult reached its height in which it was possible for the constable to speak with a chance of making himself heard. He seized his opportunity adroitly. He threw back his head and bellowed as if he were giving evidence before a deaf magistrate.

"'E's—stolen—a—mo—tor—car! I'm a-r-resting—'im—for—'avin'—sto—len—a—norter-mo*bile!*" he vociferated in accents audible to all. And then, with the sudden swiftness of one practised in the art of spiriting felons away from the midst of their friends, he was gone, and Ukridge with him.

There followed a long moment of bewildered amazement. Nothing like this had ever happened before at political meetings at Redbridge, and the audience seemed doubtful how to act. The first person to whom intelligence returned was a grim-looking little man in the third row, who had forced himself into prominence during the chairman's speech with some determined heckling. He bounded out of his chair and stood on it.

"Men of Redbridge!" he shouted.

"Siddown!" roared the audience automatically.

"Men of Redbridge," repeated the little man, in a voice out of all proportion to his inches, "are you going to trust—do you mean to support—is it your intention to place your affairs in the hands of one who employs *criminals*——"

"Siddown!" recommended many voices, but there were many others that shouted "'Ear, 'Ear!"

"—who employs *criminals* to speak on his platform? Men of Redbridge, I——"

Here someone grasped the little man's collar and brought him to the floor. Somebody else hit the collar-grasper over the head with an umbrella. A third party broke the umbrella and smote its owner on the nose. And after that the action may be said to have become general. Everybody seemed to be fighting everybody else, and at the back of the hall a group of serious thinkers, in whom I seemed to recognize the denizens of Biscuit Row, had begun to dismember the chairs and throw them at random. It was when the first rush was made for the platform that the meeting definitely broke up. The chairman headed the stampede for my little door, moving well for a man of his years, and he was closely followed by the rest of the elect. I came somewhere midway in the procession, outstripped by the leaders, but

He lifted a huge and weighty foot, and kicked.

I perceived that the hand of the Law was grasping Ukridge's shoulder.

well up in the field. The last I saw of the monster meeting in aid of Boko Lawlor's candidature was Boko's drawn and agonized face as he barked his shin on an overturned table in his efforts to reach the exit in three strides.

THE next morning dawned bright and fair, and the sun, as we speeded back to London, smiled graciously in through the windows of our third-class compartment. But it awoke no answering smile on Ukridge's face. He sat in his corner scowling ponderously out at the green countryside. He seemed in no way thankful that his prison-life was over, and he gave me no formal thanks for the swiftness and intelligence with which I had obtained his release.

A five-shilling telegram to Looney Coote had been the means of effecting this. Shortly after breakfast Ukridge had come to my hotel, a free man, with the information that Looney had wired the police of Redbridge directions to unbar the prison cell. But liberty he appeared to consider a small thing compared with his wrongs, and now he sat in the train, thinking, thinking, thinking.

I was not surprised when his first act on reaching Paddington was to climb into a cab and request the driver to convey him immediately to Looney Coote's address.

Personally, though I was considerate enough not to say so, I was pro-Coote. If Ukridge wished to go about sneaking his friends' cars without a word of explanation, it seemed to me that he did so at his own risk. I could not see how Looney Coote could be expected to know by some form of telepathy that his vanished Winchester-Murphy had fallen into the hands of an old schoolfellow. But Ukridge, to judge by his stony stare and tightened lips, not to mention the fact that his collar had jumped off its stud and he had made no attempt to adjust it, thought differently. He sat in the cab, brooding silently, and when we reached our destination and were shown into Looney's luxurious sitting-room, he gave one long,

deep sigh, like that of a fighter who hears the gong go for round one.

Looney fluttered out of the adjoining room in pyjamas and a flowered dressing-gown. He was evidently a late riser.

"Oh, here you are!" he said, pleased. "I say, old man, I'm awfully glad it's all right."

"All right!" An overwrought snort escaped Ukridge. His bosom swelled beneath his mackintosh. "All right!"

"I'm frightfully sorry there was any trouble."

Ukridge struggled for utterance.

"Do you know I spent the night on a beastly plank bed?" he said, huskily.

"No, really? I say!"

"Do you know that this morning I was washed by the authorities?"

"I say, no!"

"And you say it's all right!"

He had plainly reached the point where he proposed to deliver a lengthy address of a nature calculated to cause alarm and despondency in Looney Coote, for he raised a clenched fist, shook it passionately, and swallowed once or twice. But before he could embark on what would certainly have been an oration worth listening to, his host anticipated him.

"I don't see that it was my fault," bleated Looney Coote, voicing my own sentiments.

"You don't see that it was your fault!" stuttered Ukridge.

"Listen, old man," I urged, pacifically. "I didn't like to say so before, because you didn't seem in the mood for it, but what else could the poor chap have done? You took his car without a word of explanation——"

"What?"

"——and naturally he thought it had been stolen and had word sent out to the police-stations to look out for whoever had got it. As a matter of fact, it was I who advised him to."

Ukridge was staring bleakly at Looney.

"Without a word of explanation!" he echoed. "What about my letter, the long and carefully-written letter I sent you explaining the whole thing?"

"Letter?"

"Yes!"

"I got no letter," said Looney Coote.

Ukridge laughed malevolently.

"You're going to pretend it went wrong in the post, eh? Thin, very thin. I am certain that letter was posted. I remember placing it in my pocket for that purpose. It is not there now, and I have been wearing this suit ever since I left London. See. These are all the contents of my——"

His voice trailed off as he gazed at the envelope in his hand. There was a long silence. Ukridge's jaw dropped slowly.

"Now, how the deuce did that happen?" he murmured.

I am bound to say that Looney Coote in this difficult moment displayed a nice magnanimity which I could never have shown. He merely nodded sympathetically.

"I'm always doing that sort of thing myself," he said. "Never can remember to post letters. Well, now that that's all explained, have a drink, old man, and let's forget about it."

The gleam in Ukridge's eye showed that the invitation was a welcome one, but the battered relics of his conscience kept him from abandoning the subject under discussion as his host had urged.

"But upon my Sam, Looney, old horse," he stammered, "I—well, dash it, I don't know what to say. I mean——"

Looney Coote was fumbling in the sideboard for the materials for a friendly carouse.

"Don't say another word, old man, not another word," he pleaded. "It's the sort of thing that might have happened to anyone. And, as a matter of fact, the whole affair has done me a bit of good. Dashed lucky it has turned out for me. You see, it came as a sort of omen. There was an absolute outsider running in the third race at Kempton Park the day after the car went called Stolen Goods, and somehow it seemed to me that the thing had been sent for a purpose. I crammed on thirty quid at twenty-five to one. The people round about laughed when they saw me back this poor, broken-down-looking moke, and, dash it, the animal simply romped home! I collected a parcel!"

We clamoured our congratulations on this happy ending. Ukridge was especially exuberant.

"Yes," said Looney Coote, "I won seven hundred and fifty quid. Just like that! I put it on with that new fellow you were telling me about at the O. W. dinner, old man—that chap Isaac O'Brien. It sent him absolutely broke and he's had to go out of business. He's only paid me six hundred quid so far, but says he has some sort of a sleeping partner or something who may be able to raise the balance."

(Another story by P. G. Wodehouse next month.)

The Quest of the Grizzly-Gray

by

BERTRAM ATKEY

ILLUSTRATED BY C.E.BROCK R.I.

I.

MR.—or, more properly, Master—Nelson Rodney Drake Chiddenham was groaning under the heel of his all but mortal handicap. That is to say, he might have been groaning but for the serious anatomical difficulty presented by a mouth and throat full of puff pastry—comparatively puff, being home-made—laboriously and not unskilfully sleighted from the cookery department of the home which had sheltered Nelson Rodney for some twelve well-filled years.

Times, in spite of the puffish pastry, were undeniably hard, and the handicap was heavy, being indeed no less a matter than the fact that Nelson was the "baby" of a family comprising fourteen healthy sisters and three heftsome brothers—so healthy and so heftsome that Nelson was finding it hard, plumb hard, to make a decent "living."

Sitting comfortably in the inner apartment of the establishment of a humble friend of his, Nelson Rodney was giving a vital problem his earnest attention. He was relying wholly upon himself in this, for it was in vain to look for counsel from his friend, partly because his friend was fast asleep, and partly because she was a large and wholly self-centred pig. Nelson, in short, had retreated, after the successful raid upon the pie deposit, to a so far secret cyclone cellar of his—the sheltered part of the sty of the Gloucester Old Spot. It was quite clean enough there—clean enough

Copyright, 1923, by Bertram Atkey.

"Hullo, Aug! I say, Aug, I wanted to ask you a favour, Aug," he began, ingratiatingly.

for Nelson, a sturdy and philosophical youth—though with its tang. A stiff breeze would have improved it—but the niceties of ventilation were not in the least likely to harrow Nelson Chiddenham's mind for quite a number of years to come. He knew, for he was not lacking in the strategical instinct, where he was safe. In a world of prying and almost vulgarly critical elders few of the small boy species will disdain a place of tranquil safety by reason of a lack of balminess in the immediately adjacent atmosphere.

It was a legend in the family of Chiddenham that Nelson was a naturally delicate boy, and it was an accepted fact that the series of accidents which, quite unaccountably, had befallen him during his brief life had certainly done nothing to lessen this delicacy.

Let us survey the lad as he sits pensively removing, with the lower part of his face, certain deposits of jam left upon his fingers. It is not to be disputed that he wore his skinny right leg in a peculiarly constructed semi-cage of iron, leather, and straps—a cumbrous and unsightly device, but one of which Nelson appeared to be serenely unconscious. At the age of nine years there had been no straighter leg than Nelson's right. But on the day after his ninth birthday the Affair of the Rejected Army Mule had taken place. . . . It would be an act of folly to maintain that small boys and rejected Army mules react favourably upon each other. They do not normally envisage situations from the same angle. It had been Nelson's fixed resolve to follow the hounds that day, and—heavily armed, as he conceived it—he had neither hesitated nor quailed from an endeavour to carry out that resolution. The mule, as it chanced, did not wish any fox-hunting that day. Somebody or something had perforce to yield. It fell to the lot of Nelson's right leg to do the yielding. About three inches above the ankle—and the mark on the snag protruding from the old oak tree prominent in the ensuing *débâcle* for many years will remain a never-failing source of interest and reminiscence to Nelson Rodney. But the iron device was satisfactorily though slowly fulfilling its purpose. Some day the leg would be straight again. The doctors had

guaranteed it. Nelson's mother was very glad of that. Nelson had no feelings about it except that he was politely glad mother was glad.

The large, strongly-constructed spectacles which Nelson wore had their origin in a slight miscalculation on his part concerning the period of time which must elapse between the application of fire to gunpowder and perfect combustion of the said gunpowder. Nelson, on that occasion, had been over-liberal in his estimate—but both the oculist and the optician had guaranteed that by the time he was sixteen Nelson's eyes would be perfect again. And, indeed, parts of the eyebrows had already begun to sprout. Nelson's mother was glad of that also.

For the rest Nelson was comparatively intact—a smallish, red-haired, silent, watchful, green-eyed, freckled boy, much given to keeping his own counsel, and usually absorbed in urgent private affairs.

With his brothers and sisters Nelson Chiddenham was not a *succès fou*—for a considerable space of time still separated the youth from the period when he was fated to become, by his own efforts, so wealthy that he could maintain the whole seventeen of them in luxurious idleness and hardly notice the yawning hole it made in his ever-increasing resources. Most of the sisters claimed to regard Nelson as a "dirty little scrub who smelt of ferrets"; others hardly ever saw him unless they trod on his foot or needed somebody to run an errand.

"They're too old for me," he had more than once confided to Dusty, his dog. "Except mother—and she's always so busy it don't seem right to bother her. But if she had time to come and see 'em, I bet she'd like my young weasels down at the cottage."

With regard to his father, the Squire of Chiddenham, Nelson kept an entirely open mind. He liked him, and he appreciated the civility with which his parent always treated him. They were not very close to each other, and Nelson was not quite sure that he understood his father very well. But on the infrequent occasions when they met alone, the boy had observed a curiously promising twinkle in the usually rather dreamy, absent eyes. Normally, Mr. George Chiddenham's expression was absent, like that of a man pondering some obscure and baffling problem, but that he was capable of taking an intelligent and active interest in things he had proved to Nelson when, appearing unexpectedly at the tumble-down, disused gamekeeper's cottage at the edge of the Big Wood, used by Nelson for various purposes, he had found his son endeavouring to encourage an ailing polecat ferret back to health with a small piece of dead sparrow. Rather surprisingly, he had disclosed a fund of extremely useful knowledge concerning the feeding of sick ferrets—which knowledge he had cheerfully placed at his son's disposal. But this was a red-letter day. As a rule, the Squire was too busy farming to see much of Nelson.

And the very best that can be said of the relations between his brothers—all years ahead of him—and Nelson is that they were highly fluctuating and most unsettled.

Nelson, having completed the pastry, studied in silence for a moment the huge form of the Gloucester Old Spot. There must have been some hypnotic quality in his green-eyed glare through the big spectacles, for the pig grunted uneasily.

"Shut up and let me think," said Nelson, passionlessly, and dug his chin deep into the cupped palms of his hands, staring blankly ahead.

"A grizzly-gray Russian wolf-cub cheap," he muttered. "I'll bet I could tame him to eat outa my hand! If only I could *get* him! I shall never have another chance to buy a grizzly-gray Russian wolf-cub cheap as long as I live, and I know it," he said. "And it wouldn't be cheap even now if it wasn't sick."

Probably that was true.

TIDINGS, borne by an hysterically excited junior satellite, son of the woodman, had come to Nelson that at a circus whose wandering tent was pitched on the outskirts of the town, some five miles away, there was a "great grizzly-gray Russian she-wolf" with a litter consisting of two well and one unwell cubs. The satellite, reporting, had overheard the wolf-tamer himself say to another gentleman in overalls that he'd sell the sick cub if he could.

With what, in Nelson's opinion, was very marked intelligence, the ten-year-old son of the woodman had travelled with extreme swiftness with this news to Nelson. And it had arrived at a fatal hour when there remained in the exchequer of Master Chiddenham precisely three pence—and one of these was very doubtful.

Nevertheless, he intended to secure that unwell grizzly-gray Russian. He had made up his mind, and he had once heard his father say that making up one's mind was slightly more than half the battle. Because he suspected his parent of wisdom, he had believed that.

He had made up his mind to have that wolf-cub. It was therefore half his already. All he had to do now was just to get it—and pay for it.

When, presently, healthy hunger hounded him from his retreat towards the big,

rambling, rather dilapidated old Manor House which was home, he had come to the conclusion that he would have to make an effort to borrow the money.

Fortunately, there was a possibility that he might just pull it off, for August, his brother, had just been left the staggering sum of fifty pounds by an aunt with whom August had always been a favourite; and, even more fortunately, he and August were at the moment on as amicable terms as can exist between a large youth of nineteen and a boy of twelve.

Heading urgently towards the dining-room, it was his fortune to encounter August, looking a little flushed, just outside the door of his father's room, and he seized the opportunity instantly.

"Hullo, Aug! I say, Aug, I wanted to ask you a favour, Aug," he began, ingratiatingly.

"Huh! What favour?" August's manner was ungracious.

"Well, Aug, I've got a great opportunity, only I've got no money, Aug. I was wondering if you would be a sportsman, Aug, old chap, and lend me ten bob out of that fifty pounds Aunt Emily left you in her will. Of course, I'd pay you interest on it."

Aug's glare grew a little more searching, suspicious, and incandescent, and his colour deepened. He had only just concluded an expedition to his father in search of a hefty draw upon the celebrated fifty himself, and it had disconcerted him almost to the point of gibbering lunacy to learn from his father that Aunt Emily's legacy was not payable to him until his twenty-fifth birthday, and then only if he were well and wisely married, with two children and every prospect of adding to their number. Aunt Emily was a prudent and old-fashioned lady.

August had then left, and was engaged in a desperate attempt to choke back his rage and despair at the moment brother Nelson sidled up with his modest request for a loan.

"Lend you ten bob?" he snarled. "What for?"

"Well, Aug, the fact is, I've got a chance to buy a great grizzly-gray wolf-cub, Aug."

"Buy what?"

"A wolf, Aug!"

August scowled.

"What good's a wolf?"

Nelson stared, dumbfounded. There was no answer to a question like that. If Aug couldn't see that a great gray Russian wolf-cub was about the most desirable possession in the world, he must be different from about every other living boy. Still, it would not do to argue with the plutocrat. Nelson thought for a moment.

"Well, Aug, I'm going to go in for wolves. Breed them."

"Breed 'em! Breed a lot of wolves about the place! I'll tell you what it is, you young ass, you're mad," his brother retorted. "That's what it is. I always thought you were a bit touched—now I know. Only a howling young fool would want a wolf at all, and only a gibbering young ass would want to increase and multiply 'em! Get out of it. Ten bob for a wolf, ha, ha! I haven't got ten bob for myself, much less for a mad young ass who'd only go and buy a dashed mangy wolf with it."

"But, Aug, old chap, you've got fifty pounds—ten bob isn't much out of fifty pounds," pleaded Nelson.

"D'ye think I'm going to eat into that fifty in order to have a lot of wolves poisoning the air for miles around?" snarled August. "Not me. Why, you young chump, I don't intend to touch that legacy for years yet—not till I'm twenty-five at least. In fact, I shall probably decide to keep it intact till I'm married! I'm not going to throw it away on a lot of rubbish just because I've *got* it, you young blighter!"

"Keep it till you're married!" Nelson's brain reeled in contemplation of the eternity thrust upon his vision.

He pulled himself together and turned away, convinced that something had slipped or got jammed inside poor old Aug's skull. *He'd* never get on. Still, let him wait. Let him wait till the wolf-breeding business was in full swing—when the wolves would be pouring out and the money pouring in. He'd regret his folly then.

Reluctantly, Nelson went round to the back to wash his hands before the midday meal. He knew, from bitter experience, that it was hardly worth while trying to eat his dinner without first doing that. Lynx-eyed sister Ella would certainly notice a slight stain or so on the fingers—probably mere sunburn—and would direct public attention, in her sarcastic way, to the fact that Nelson's skin was turning a dark grayish-brown—beginning with his hands.

II.

IT was not a pleasant meal for Nelson. He was worried about the matter of the purchase price of the wolf. He could not see where it was coming from. Even if he were willing to sell his collection of animals down at the old cottage it would hardly be possible to find buyers for them. True, the naturalist in the town had once offered to exchange a tortoise for his pair of red squirrels, or to give him a poisoned spear for his big grass snake; or even, at a pinch, to

trade a genuine green Egyptian lizard, a pedigree Burmese warty toad, a goldfish, a first-class Peruvian spotted newt, and a very fine broken aquarium for his collection of birds' eggs. But the naturalist would not discuss money transactions save only when the money travelled inwards to him instead of outwards from him. He wasn't much of a naturalist—and, anyway, he had gone bankrupt several months ago.

Nelson, lost in thought, shook his head. No, there was nothing to be done with the naturalist—even if he were to be trusted with the news that a real grizzly-gray was in the market.

Nelson was extricated suddenly from his reverie by a question put to his father by Ambrose, the eldest brother, a serious-looking, elderly-mannered gentleman of something over thirty. Ambrose was a very determined farmer, and, that being so, had no time for frivolities.

"Did your shepherd ever find that sheep which was missing?" asked Ambrose.

"No." The Squire shook his head.

"It was probably stolen," said Ambrose, gravely. "John Carlow, at Greylands, lost one a month ago in just the same way. I doubt if you will ever get it back."

The Squire agreed.

"No. Probably not. On the whole, I hope not. The flock was insured—and I had a cheque for the value of the sheep this morning. Bayliss arranged it for me. It worked out at something a little better than to-day's price. I would be satisfied to lose the whole flock on the same terms." He laughed.

"Have you any idea or suspicion as to who stole it?" pursued Ambrose.

"Not the slightest. Alive or dead, the sheep belongs to the insurance people now—and naturally they wouldn't expect me to waste time hunting for it."

Nelson kept his eyes on his plate even more fixedly, if possible, than was his custom. For, though his parent may have had no idea as to the possible sheep-stealer, it was far otherwise with Nelson. He had suspicions of the most pronounced variety—indeed, he had been rather busily engaged in conducting certain private investigations of his own when the overwhelming news of the grizzly-gray was first broken to him.

Nelson's eyes, behind the big lenses, had noticed things which his elders had left unnoticed, and Nelson's alleged-to-be-faulty brains had coiled about one or two things which the brains of the elders had not heeded.

The boy believed that he knew where the sheep—or most of it—was.

But his father's airy unconcern—now that the insurance had been paid—was rather puzzling. How was it that a man—a wise man—could afford to lose a good Hampshire down wether, fail to recover the mutton, but collect instead, by means of insurance, something rather better than the value of the whole sheep? It reminded Nelson of the complicated problems which an earnest young man, engaged for a brief period only on the occasion of the mule affair to steady Nelson along with his education until he was fit to go back to school, had endeavoured to drill into his inner being. He went steadily through his pudding, pondering dimly the possibilities of purchasing the wolf by means of this miracle-working insurance, but he arrived at nothing—except the end of his pudding.

So that when, presently, with a parting scowl at the niggard August, Nelson issued forth from the house, the grizzly-gray seemed as far, if not actually farther away than ever.

THERE is no record that the youth was seen by any human eye for the next three hours, though there were indications that he had passed through the kitchen garden—pausing briefly but effectively by a bed of early, three parts ripe strawberries, carefully and painstakingly forced by the gardener. And it was later argued, with some heat, by sister Ella that Nelson and his dog—a cinnamon, white, and mud-coloured creature of extremely abject appearance but remarkably quick wits—had been in her poultry yard that afternoon. If not, how came it that the big rooster's glorious tail feathers had departed from their lawful grower and proprietor? By these, and other, minor devastations a good tracker could, with care, have followed the wolf-hunter from his home, through the woods, across the far downs, over a railway cutting, to a lonely and dilapidated hut by a small wood several miles from Chiddenham House.

Arrived here—seeming as fresh as an early morning skylark, in spite of his apparent disabilities—Nelson sought cover behind a small pile of firewood.

"Lie down, Dusty," he hissed softly to his dog, "while I see whether anybody's at home."

For perhaps ten minutes Nelson lay, like the serpent of the dust, upon his stomach, his big lenses trained point-blank on the uninviting abode of a gentleman known in the neighbourhood as "Partridge" Johnson and his wife.

Mr. Johnson possessed, as his nickname may indicate, a local celebrity as an accomplished poacher. He was an unlovely person, usually very silent, but harsh on the rare occasions when he broke his habitual silence. He was an unfriend of Nelson for two reasons—the first being that he had once

kicked Dusty with considerable and uncalled-for severity in the ribs, the other being that he customarily addressed Nelson, when they met in the solitude of the countryside, as "Iron-leg," accompanying the name with gestures of derision.

Upon the whole Mr. Partridge Johnson might, without injustice, be summed up as the local petty malefactor and wrongdoer. But his general unloveliness was paralleled by his craft, and though he lived ever in the shadow of suspicion he was rarely the victim of incontrovertible proof.

Nelson was convinced that Mr. Johnson comprised the mysterious agency which had spirited away his father's sheep from its fold.

THERE was no sign that either Mr. or Mrs. Johnson was in residence that afternoon. No smoke ascended from the cottage chimney, the door was shut, the windows were closed, and the place was still. A lean cat went prowling, on some quest of her own, past the front of the house, and disappeared into a bed of tall nettles in the untilled garden at the side. Having restrained Dusty from the cat, Nelson drew his catapult and quietly but firmly put a test pebble through one of the few intact panes of the window—as it might be a ranging shot.

The falling glass made quite a satisfactory amount of noise—but it failed to evoke any signs of life. Nobody appeared to revile the attacker, or, in their turn, to attack him.

It was evident that Mr. and Mrs. Partridge Johnson were not at home.

Nelson emerged from ambush, and, with Dusty, began an energetic search of the establishment.

But half an hour's diligent work convinced him that the place was sheepless and mutton-less.

Though not trackless. For, in two places outside, Nelson had discovered faint impressions that might have been caused by the neat hoofs of a sheep.

Nelson came out into the yard frowning, and stared with ferocious concentration at the hovel.

"Dusty, ol' man, it's here, somewhere, I know it's here—— "

A rook came languidly oaring her way over the hut with black, ragged wings, heading for a clump of distant elms. Nelson glanced up carelessly, but stiffened at once.

"Hey, Dusty, see that?"

The bird was carrying something uncommonly like a scrap of meat in its beak.

They watched the rook until she disappeared, heading steadily for the far-off elm clump which, Nelson knew, harboured a small rookery.

"*Now* who's right, Dusty, old man? She's found something for her young ones here—and she'll be back in a minute," declared Nelson, and moved to a strategical point from which he could comfortably command a view of the elms. Here, rendering himself almost totally inconspicuous, he waited, glaring anxiously across country.

"If you want anything urgently, Dusty, you got to get it yourself always," he muttered once. Dusty, who seemed to be searching himself, as though for something he needed urgently, grinned agreement.

Far off a black dot appeared against the blue sky, quickly magnifying itself into the sable-winged rook.

"She's coming back, Dusty," snapped Nelson. "Keep quiet."

The bird headed steadily over the watchers, passed above the hut, and dropped into the wood at the back.

Nelson and Dusty dropped round into that wood also.

Five minutes' search, aided by the rook, led them to the *cache* of Mr. Partridge Johnson. It was high up in a thick lightning-riven branch of a huge oak that Nelson found what the rook had found first. Roughly wrapped in loose sacking, and so fresh that it could only have been put there that morning, the wolf-hunter found mutton belonging to the insurance company to the extent of two legs, one shoulder, a large loin, and a broken paper parcel of scraps—about twenty-five pounds of it in all. It was freshly killed, and probably Mr. Johnson was absent on the business of disposing of the surplus.

Precariously clinging to a bough with one wiry hand, Nelson wiped away the sweat of effort with his sleeve.

In his somewhat excited mood he was not calculating quite so closely as usual.

He stared at the mutton.

"There's half a hundredweight of beautiful mutton up here, Dusty," he said in a hoarse undertone. "Have a bit, ol' chap."

He cast a piece down.

For a few seconds he remained still, thinking.

"A half-hundredweight of beautiful mutton ought to be worth an awful lot of money to a circus man," he reflected. "For he's got to get enough food for the clowns and the bareback riders and all of them as well as the animals. I should think he would be glad to change the smallest grizzly-gray for all this mutton."

He drew breath and fell furiously to work. There were a hundred reasons for haste, as Nelson envisaged the problem, none for delay.

He drew from their arboreal *cache* the joints and dropped them one by one on

to the ground, warning Dusty off them with blood-freezing menaces.

Then, with something of the happy and careless abandon of a monkey sliding down from his home at dawn, Nelson slid down the big trunk of the oak, searched himself successfully for string, attached the joints, and, festooning the mass of mutton as gracefully as possible around his neck, tottered hurriedly out of the wood.

His brows were corrugated, and behind the lenses his green eyes were anxious. But his wide, not unattractive mouth was set tight and his oval chin—mother's—was stuck forward. Nelson Rodney Chiddenham was heavily in action, and the blood of the Chiddenhams was "up," though fortunately his pores were working well.

It was a hot, still day, airless, and by no means ideal for strenuous effort.

Nelson knew it before he had toted the mutton a hundred yards.

"It's gona be mighty tough, Dust, ol' man!" he grunted, quoting freely but sincerely from the last film he had been privileged to see.

Dusty yelped hungry acquiescence.

They cleared the stifling, insect-droning wood, and faced the open country.

"There's all of a hundredweight of mutton here, Dusty," said Nelson, grimly.

The shadow of the keenly interested rook glided across the grass and a raucous, even sardonic "*Kraw!*" answered him.

Nelson ignored it, though Dusty cocked a threatening eye skywards.

"We've got to make use of every bit of cover we can, Dusty," said Nelson. "In case Johnson comes home soon enough to track us."

Mill-stoned with mutton, scarlet-faced with exertion, he zigzagged from one to another of the sparse bushes.

Dusty seemed to understand, for he stared back at the wood, his teeth bared savagely. If the sole remaining fragment of his tail had not been wagging furiously he would have looked almost formidable.

"Come on then," said Nelson, and headed for the first bit of scrub—visible but dimly through the perspiration-misted glasses.

You perceive this man-child clearly? Mill-stoned with mutton, scarlet-faced with exertion, his imperfect but securely "ironed" leg buckling a little as he moved slowly but grimly, zigzagging from one to another of the sparse bushes growing here and there on the downs. With only one pal in the world—as one might put it—his faithful dog; with, broadly speaking, the birds of ill-omen following grimly, like vultures

following a lost explorer in a remote and death-haunted desolation; and with the imminent peril of finding that mean and ugly outlaw Partridge Johnson, not to mention Mrs. P. J., hot on his trail, it was a full afternoon for Nelson Rodney.

But inside his big, queer-shaped head his brains were cool and quiet—though he was quite unaware of that fact.

He needed everything he had—and he knew it. Every ounce of physical strength was required for mutton-transportation; and dimly he felt that every cubic inch of brains he possessed would be needed to square up a further problem which was shaping itself in his mind.

Although this mutton was not Partridge Johnson's property, neither was it his. It belonged to the insurance company of which Sir Milner Bayliss, whose big country estate joined his father's, was the Great White Chief, and Nelson knew that his staggering steps should be trending towards the house of Sir Milner Bayliss—instead of towards the circus. He ought to be taking the meat to its lawful proprietor, and he knew it. But he was doing nothing of the kind. He was carting it with Herculean labour to the circus in the hope of bartering it for a grizzly-gray wolf-cub.

This created a serious problem, which weighed upon his conscience well-nigh as heavily as the mutton weighed upon his neck and shoulders.

But, conscience or no conscience, his jaw was set. The wolf was the thing. Later on he would attend to Sir Milner Bayliss, the insurance company, and all other minor difficulties.

III.

IT was perhaps three hours later when, bearing a bulgy sack—achieved from his friend the bankrupt naturalist in return for a couple of thick loin chops—Nelson arrived at the circus.

Things were fairly quiet there, the afternoon performance being over and the evening show not yet due for some time.

Nelson was ready for a rest—and looked it—but the sight, sound, and odour of the circus camp reinvigorated him with electric suddenness.

His burden, which, during the latter half of his long-drawn afternoon travail, had seemed to be a load of large ox remains rather than of medium-sized sheep pieces, grew suddenly light; much of his appearance of fatigue vanished; his normal grin re-established itself winningly upon his perspiration-streaked face; and, like that of Dusty the dog, his carriage was confident, his gait proud, and his general air was gay.

He paused outside a garish cage, flamboyant with boldly—almost desperately—painted representations of very large wolves in various stages of wrath and hunger. In a corner, back from the bars, lay a grayish, rather shabby she-wolf. To an impartial eye she was diminutive, dingy, and apparently depressed—but not so to Nelson. Two woolly-looking cubs were playing languidly about the cage, and, partly concealed by the old wolf, Nelson saw, with a thrill, *his* cub. At least, he fancied so.

Nelson dumped down his sack, drew his breath tautly, took a good long refreshing sniff of the romantic air in the neighbourhood of the wolf-cage, and looked about him for the wolf-tamer. Physically he was all strung up and vibrating with excitement, but deep in the centre of his head the delicate main bearing of his brain, so to express it, was as cool and clean and sweet as if he was seated quietly at home in private self-communion in the apartments of the Gloucester Old Spot. He addressed himself to a large person with an indurated and weather-bitten countenance, wearing an extremely tight and considerably soiled jersey patterned chastely in pink and white horizontal stripes. This individual was eating an apple and staring thoughtfully at the she-wolf also.

"Excuse me," said Nelson. "Can you tell me, please, where the wolf-tamer is?"

The striped gentleman turned, staring down at the lenses.

"Sure, kid," he said, in a rather harsh voice. "I'm it."

"Oh, thank you very much," answered Nelson, surprised but intensely polite. He had expected to see a man with fewer stripes and much more brass-bound and be-uniformed. It was a very small and but poorly financed circus, but—a circus is a circus to a small boy, not a balance sheet. It had never occurred to Nelson that there existed such a paradox as a poverty-stricken circus, or a wolf-tamer who was not only expected but perfectly willing to clean out the den of his own wolves.

The tamer seemed conversationally inclined.

"Yes, kid, I'm it, believe me. I tamed that wolf in there so she'll follow me like a dog."

"I beg your pardon, but would you be willing to sell the littlest of the three cubs in there?" asked Nelson. "I heard—someone told me that you said you would be glad to sell it."

The man stared.

"Not glad, son. Sorry to sell—but willing."

He eyed Nelson intently.

"Y'see, son, that little cub may grow up into the pick of the pack! These little

"Excuse me," said Nelson. "Can you tell me, please, where the wolf-tamer is?"
"Sure, kid," he said. "I'm it."

scrubs often do. You gotta be careful with wolves. They're deceptive. Many a tamer has sold an undersized cub what grew into an over-size prize wolf. Still, I'm well stocked with wolves at present, and maybe we might do a little business together. Anyway, I'm willing to talk it over."

Nelson reflected.

"If you decided to sell, how much would you want for the cub?" he asked. The striped gentleman scratched his chin.

"Well, now, how much have you got, son?"

"No money," admitted Nelson.

The striped gentleman began to scowl—then he grinned a tight-lipped sort of grin.

"Say, kid, if you ain't got money you got nerve," he stated.

Nelson flushed, but preserved his careful politeness.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I did not mean to try to get the wolf for nothing. Although I haven't any money—except threepence—I happen to have rather a lot of splendid fresh mutton—and I thought perhaps, with so many people to be fed, a circus would be willing to exchange a—spare wolf for it."

The wolf-tamer looked interested.

"Mutton—fresh, splendid mutton, hey? You want to swap mutton for the little wolf, hey? Is it cooked? What I mean, is it some of your dinner left over and saved up, son?"

"Oh, *no*," said Nelson. "The sheep was only killed this morning."

"How much is there of it—this mutton?" demanded the striped gentleman, whose interest seemed to be growing fast. "A half a leg? A leg, maybe? Is that it, kid? Is that your idea—a leg of nice, fresh roasting mutton for this first-class little wolf of mine, hey?"

Nelson fought back his rising excitement.

"Oh, I would be quite willing to give a little more than one leg," he said, in a voice which he strove to make equable.

The striped gentleman was smiling in a very friendly way.

"Two legs, perhaps? Would you go as far as two legs of mutton for the wolf, son?" His eye fell to the sack and seemed so piercing that Nelson's nerve grew shaky.

He girded himself together and looked the striped gentleman in the eye.

"I should be willing to give two legs, one shoulder, and a large piece of somewhere else—loin, I think—for the grizzly-gray cub."

Real excitement showed on the face of the striped gentleman. He glanced around the camp.

"Jest step round the back of the cage, son, will you? I'd like to take a look at the mutton. I'll own it sounds good to me. We—we—been rather short o' mutton in this show lately."

He might truthfully have added beef and pork to that—but refrained.

It needed no more than a glance.

"Yes, it's a good bit of mutton," said the wolf-tamer, thumbing it. "Very good indeed. It's your own property, hey, kid?"

Nelson blushed.

"I brought it on purpose," he said. The striped gentleman did not press the point.

"And you'll freely hand me the bagful for the wolf?"

"Oh, yes," said Nelson, his eyes starting.

"Wait here, old man!"

The striped gentleman took a scrap of meat and entered the cage through a door in the wooden back. Nelson held his breath for sounds of conflict. You can't rob a wolf of her cubs how you like. But, disappointingly, the tamer reappeared almost instantly with a limp, languid scrap of big-eyed skin and bone in his hand.

"It's a go, son. Here's the wolf," he said.

"H-here's the mutton!" replied Nelson. "And thanks very much."

"That's all right. Keep him warm and give him plenty of milk and maybe you'll pull him through after all," advised the striped gentleman, picking up the mutton sack. "That's the quickest way out. Put the wolf under your coat as you go—for sake of the warmth."

Nelson did so.

NOBODY stopped him. Nobody tried to take the wolf-cub away from him. It was, in a way, astonishing, incredible, but as he went swiftly, with Dusty the dog, through the small town not a single soul seemed to notice that anything had happened.

Once safely out in the country he and Dusty thoroughly inspected the grizzly-gray.

He was a bit small and he didn't seem very well, but those were things that might happen to any wolf-cub.

"We'll soon fat him up, Dust," said Nelson, and pressed on. He still had some business to transact before he could strike out for home. He was acutely and uncomfortably aware that he had bartered property belonging to Sir Milner Bayliss or the insurance company for this valuable wolf, and it was urgent that somehow or other it was adjusted at once.

Half an hour later Nelson Rodney passed through a pair of magnificent wrought-iron gates into the long carriage drive leading to Sir Milner's residence.

His heart speeded up a little as presently he perceived that fortune was favouring him in so far as assuring that the suspense would be brief—for Sir Milner was sitting in a

deck chair on the big lawn before the house, with a table bearing newspapers and a tray at his side.

Clutching the wolf-cub close to his heart, and hoarsely admonishing Dusty to behave, Nelson headed straight for the formidable, even awe-inspiring figure of the millionaire.

Sir Milner was a large man and stout: his face was expansive, red, and clean-shaven, his eyes were piercing, and his mouth was severe. He was a friend of Nelson's father, and Nelson knew it—but he had always been a little scared of this big, commanding, important, dominating personage—and despite his grim resolve Nelson's progress across the smooth green lawn was very slow.

The millionaire watched him intently as he came.

There was something ominous and daunting about the big man's fixed stare, thought Nelson, gulping.

His sisters and brothers had long taught him the sheer absurdity of attaching the slightest value to himself so how was he to know, or to guess, that the childless man, sitting like the Day of Judgment before him, would gladly have given fifty thousand pounds—a hundred thousand—oh, anything—for one of his own like him—iron-legged, eyebrowless, and all.

Nelson halted, with a jerky salute.

"Good evening, sir!"

Sir Milner surveyed him gravely.

"Good evening, Nelson, my boy. How are you? Were you looking for me?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, what can I do for you? Sit down, my boy."

"I—think I'd sooner stand, sir, if you don't mind."

He was standing as stiff as a sergeant-major on parade.

"It's about that sheep father lost, sir," began Nelson, nervous but dogged. "He told my brother to-day that your insurance company had paid him for its loss, and so if it was ever found it would belong to you."

Sir Milner nodded gravely.

"That is so, my boy. Roughly speaking, you may take it that the sheep when found—if it ever is—belongs to the insurance company. Why do you ask?"

Nelson swallowed a large thing which had made its appearance in his dry throat.

"I don't think it is very likely that the sheep is alive now, sir," he said.

"Nor I, Nelson, nor I."

Sir Milner shook his head very seriously.

"And I was wondering if you would sell me the right to keep any of the sheep I happened to find—if I searched for it."

"Hum! That might be a way of—um—cutting our loss, certainly."

He appeared to reflect. If there was a twinkle in his eye, Nelson failed to notice it.

"An insurance company is always prepared to cut its losses where possible, my boy. As I see it, your idea is that somebody has stolen and killed the sheep, but you have a notion that you can sa've some of the—um—remains."

He shook his heavy head.

"It is rather a speculative investment—this hot weather. But—to open the matter—what are you prepared to pay me for this—concession—this privilege?"

Nelson braced himself.

"Threepence, sir. It's all I've got."

"Um! You leave yourself with no working capital, my boy. You had better reconsider that offer and make it twopence. Don't you think so?"

"Yes, sir."

Nelson would have agreed to anything.

Sir Milner nodded ponderously.

"Then we may say that you are tendering me, representing the United Kingdom Life, Fire, Marine, and General Insurance Company, Limited, the sum of twopence sterling for the sole right of ownership in any remains—alive or dead—of the sheep lost by your father, Squire Chiddenham, on May 15th last. Is that so?"

"Yes, sir."

"Speaking on behalf of the company, my boy, I may advise you that the offer is accepted."

A SUDDEN load slipped off Nelson's conscience. With extreme promptitude he produced and proffered the twopence.

Sir Milner took it, looked at it, and placed it on the little table.

"Thank you, my boy. You would like a receipt for this money?"

Nelson hesitated. He would very much have liked a receipt, but was it polite to answer "yes"?

Sir Milner noticed the hesitation and—surprisingly, to Nelson—divined its cause.

"Always, as long as you live, require a receipt for money paid, my boy. Then you will never have to pay twice for the same goods. Suppose I write it?"

"If you don't mind, sir."

Sir Milner took his fountain pen and a pad and wrote.

Once he paused, sniffing.

"It is a curious thing, my boy, but unless I am gravely mistaken there is a strong smell of mutton in the air. Do you smell it?"

Nelson blushed and his weak leg sagged under him.

"Mutton, sir?" he asked, thinly.

"Raw mutton, yes. But no matter, no matter."

Sir Milner finished the receipt.

"Is this satisfactory to you?" he inquired, and read it aloud:—

"'*Received this twentieth day of May 1923 the sum of Two Pence from Nelson Rodney Drake Chiddenham in complete payment for all rights in the body or remains (alive or dead) of the sheep lost by the father of the said Nelson Rodney Drake Chiddenham on May 15th 1923.*

(*Signed*) *Milner Bayliss,*
For the United Kingdom Life, Fire, Marine, and General Insurance Company, Ltd.'

"Is that satisfactory, my boy?"

"Oh, yes, thank you, sir."

"Good!" Sir Milner passed it and Nelson folded it carefully away.

"Would you like some lemonade?"

"Yes, please, sir."

Sir Milner beckoned a servant.

"I see you have another pup, Nelson," he observed, presently.

"It's a wolf-cub, sir—a great grizzly-gray Russian." Nelson drew back his coat and for a moment the chairman of the U.K.L.F.M. and G. Insurance Company and the grizzly-gray eyed each other.

"God bless my soul, boy—a wolf-cub!"

"Yes, sir. He mayn't look much now, but wolves are deceptive. He may grow into the pick of the pack."

"Is that so? Where did you get him?"

"I bought him, sir." Nelson's voice was the voice of pride.

"Did you, indeed! And if it isn't a rude question, may I inquire what you gave for him—a fine cub like that? A good deal of money, I dare say."

"Oh, no, sir—only a lot of mutton in a bag—a——" Nelson broke off, aghast.

"Hah!" Sir Milner sat up. He was thoroughly enjoying himself, but not so that Nelson noticed it.

"What mutton, boy? *Whose* mutton?"

Nelson blinked, clutching the cub till it squeaked.

"*My* mutton, sir," he gasped.

"*Your* mutton? Where did you get it?" Sir Milner's voice was stern and implacable.

"Bought it, sir."

"From whom?"

"From you, sir."

"Hah! There's sharp practice here, my boy—very sharp. It seems that you have caught me in a—a—financial trap, Nelson Chiddenham."

The big voice was stern and inflexible, and Nelson wilted, backing a pace. Dusty the dog, sensing trouble, clamped down his tail hard and backed with him.

"Yes—you have lured me into a financial trap. It seems to me that you have been selling—bartering—mutton that was not yours to sell. A dangerous practice."

But his eyes were unmistakably twinkling now, and he was laughing silently.

"It is not always a stratagem to be recommended, my boy, though at times it can be successfully employed. This appears to be one of them. Just come here and tell me the truth."

Nelson did as he was told. Sir Milner listened intently, with never an interruption, to the very end.

Then he spoke, looking curiously at the boy.

"How would you like to come into the insurance business in about eight or ten

"Hah! There's sharp practice here, my boy—very sharp. It seems that you have caught me in a—a—financial trap."

years' time, Nelson?" he said, oddly. "Don't hurry to answer now. Think it over between now and your nineteenth birthday."

Very politely, Nelson promised that he would. He still clutched the grizzly-gray tightly. Sir Milner was smiling in an odd, wistful sort of way—but you never knew—suppose he claimed the cub——

"Don't worry, Nelson," said this uncanny, thought-reading person. "I can't do a thing to you—you've got your receipt, you know. Why, if I took the matter to the High Court of Justice, I would probably lose the case. No, boy. I know when I'm licked. But I'd like another look at the wolf—if you'll oblige me."

Nelson cautiously obliged—and when the servant reappeared with Nelson's sorely-needed refreshment he was hardly noticed, so rapt in argument were Nelson and his host concerning the respective merits of soup and milk for the nourishment of backward and weakly wolves. Sir Milner broke off just long enough to order him to ring up the garage for the two-seater to run Mr. Chiddenham back to Chiddenham House, and as the man left to do this he overheard the elderly millionaire saying with some earnestness, "Well, it's a long time since I had much to do with pups, and maybe I'm out of date and old-fashioned. But, all the same, if that wolf was mine, I'd feed him up on soup, Nelson. What you say about milk is reasonable enough, yes—but there's a lot of solid nourishment in soup, Nelson. I remember I once had a span'l pup—only a pup, mind—and——"

FACE VALUE

by

ROLAND PERTWEE

ILLUSTRATED BY
CHAS. CROMBIE

ONCE upon a time there was a girl named Una who had a clear, not to say calculating, brain and a great many curls. Many and various were the possessions of Una. She was little, for instance, so little that it seemed a shame to allow her to go out alone. She had an analytic mind, five dimples, a highly-developed mathematical sense, a very disconcerting way of looking at people, a forceful handwriting, an adorable smile, a habit of speaking her mind without fear or prejudice, a streak of ambition, sweeping eyelashes, an independent spirit, and such a beautiful pout.

Collectively these assets formed a rare combination. Una was twenty and looked, perhaps, sixteen. She taught, among other subjects, domestic economy at a High School, and great was her knowledge of hydrostatics and dynamics. Una's outlook was hard and clear. Living as she did in an atmosphere of stagnation and failure, Una strove to attain progress and success. But she was too proud to employ physical attractions in furthering her ambition. She despised girls who were married for their looks, and despised marriage as means to a financial end. Chiefly on account of her dimples Una disliked and distrusted men, and chiefly on account of her mathematical sense she tolerated them.

Una's mother was a doting and stupid woman. Her father was, if possible, stupider and more doting; also he drank a little—quite a little—but it went a long way and kept him from doing likewise. Between them they made a conspiracy, and, like the conspiracies of many other foolish and infatuated folk, it succeeded.

They sent a portrait of Una to a pictorial paper, where, after prolonged examination by experts, it was awarded first prize in a beauty competition.

That was the beginning of the end—also it was the beginning of the beginning.

The newspapers raved—the film magnates gathered in their legion. From east and west offers to "star" and "feature" fell in dozens upon the door-mat of Number 19, Acacia Walk, Southend-on-Sea.

Now when her portrait first appeared in the paper Una was bitterly wroth with her parents. How, she queried, was discipline to be maintained at her classes if such vulgar extravagancies were permitted? She reminded her mother of the brush which had occurred between herself and the photographer when the likeness was taken. She had resented the wrapping of tulle he insisted upon. It was disgusting that such a thing should be exhibited in company with "Fair Competitor from Cambridge," "Sea Sprite from Skegness," and the like. Disgusting! Her portrait had been titled "A Wistful Westcliff Maid."

Although gifted with unbounded courage, the young domestic economist hardly dared to face her class on the day of selection for the prize of beauty. To conceal chagrin and embarrassment she screwed her curls into a tight bun and wore pince-nez which greatly interfered with her sight. Her entrance into the class-room was the cue for an uproar. There was clapping, then stamping of feet and some shrill maidenly cheers. The bun and the pince-nez were regarded as very fine examples of humour and loudly applauded.

With the greatest difficulty Una succeeded in making herself heard. What she said was disparaging to the intellects of those present. There was no charity in her choice of words. She let out and a silence fell.

Copyright, 1923, by Roland Pertwee.

Presently came a summons from the principal.

The principal said: "Such vulgar notoriety," etc.

Una agreed with every word.

The principal concluded: "Mr. Woolgar" (he was Chairman of the School Council) "is here and wishes to see you."

Terrible news this. Mr. Woolgar's appearances were a portent of disaster.

In the corridor outside the Council Chamber Una paused and bit the back of her hand. Then she removed her pince-nez and shook out her curls. The five dimples which had been taking the morning off went quickly to their posts.

Mr. Woolgar was much nicer than might have been expected.

His first words were:—

"Miss Drayton, this sort of thing won't do."

His last:—

"I'm dashed if I wouldn't have given you the prize myself."

Una hated him and despised herself.

She arrived home in time to sort over the first batch of correspondence. There were many letters of congratulation, several applications from photographers for sittings, and an offer to appear on the films.

"You must write at once and accept it," said her mother.

Una tore the letter in pieces.

Next morning there were five more offers.

"You must accept them all," her mother said.

Una destroyed them all.

"Oh, dear," wailed Mrs. Drayton. "I suppose you want to go on teaching for the rest of your life?"

Una looked at her with pity.

"My dear mother," she said, "you seem unable to work out the simplest sum."

On her way to the school she was snapshotted by several reporters. Una was angry and pouted. That pout in varying degrees of enlargement and reduction appeared next day at, roughly speaking, three million breakfast tables.

"What a film face!" said the wise ones of Wardour Street.

Offers continued to pour in and were as continuously ignored. Mrs. Drayton was in despair. Her husband, who, in spite of most excellent intentions, had never succeeded in earning more than eight pounds a week, and that intermittently, was also in despair.

Una continued to take her classes to all outward appearances unmoved. But in her bedroom at night she lay with wide-open eyes while her ambitions soared upward to astonishing heights.

FAILING to receive satisfaction by post, the emissaries of the Film World began to call in person. Una declined to see them, and went on declining until one day the four biggest men in the business gathered together at Southend. There were Belmore of "The Superb," Sharp Dexter of "The Great Universal," Fennimore Sleath of "Non Pareil Films, Ltd.," and F. S. Arbiter, whose latest production, "How Far is St. Helena?" had shaken continents with admiration.

These giants, by an odd coincidence, travelled down in the same train, and eyed each other with rude hostility. Such men were not to be denied. One after another they called at her father's house and then at the school. Una smiled to herself, for the moment was at hand. She regretted inability to see anyone during class-time, but gave each an appointment for four-thirty that afternoon.

The atmosphere was electric when the rivals found themselves gathered about a single table. Una allowed them ten minutes to get acclimatized to one another. Belmore, a huge man with a fat, smiling face, broke the ice by laughing and slapping his thigh.

"Seems to me, gentlemen," he giggled, "we're up against a tough proposition."

A moment later the tough proposition entered.

She was wearing a blue-and-white chequered frock, with a quakerish collar. It was just run together, and looked as though it might have been taken from the stores of a Foundling Institution. Una stood on one foot and scratched the toe of it with the sole of the other. A shaft of afternoon sunlight set fire to her curls. Una knew where the afternoon sunlight pitched at that particular hour, and had delayed her entrance for the passing of a cloud.

The four men gazed spellbound and speechless. Then F. S. Arbiter said:—

"Oh, clever, clever, clever!"

Una shook her curls and walked briskly to the table.

"And now," she demanded, in a precise tone, "what can I do for you?"

They began to speak, but Una held up a hand.

"One at a time," she pleaded, "or we shall get nowhere. Mr. Sleath, perhaps, would begin."

Fennimore Sleath did not approve of this introduction. He was accustomed to respect, not to say fawning, from tyros. Here was a young person without a sense of proportion. He frowned and said:—

"It is possible, Miss Drayton, I might consider offering you an engagement."

"Why, surely it has gone beyond consideration?" said Una.

Sleath waved a hand testily.

"You lose sight of the fact that I am able to do you a great service."

"And yourself?" queried Una. 'It can't all be kindness of heart, Mr. Sleath."

He folded his arms and looked grim. Una turned with a smile to Belmore.

"Mr. Belmore!"

"Is a three years' contract any good?" bubbled that jovial man.

"It's certainly better," she admitted.

"And five years' is better still," Sharp Dexter cut in.

Una shook her head.

"Too long. Don't you agree, Mr. Arbiter?"

F. S. Arbiter said nothing.

"If it's a matter of contracts——" began Sleath.

But Belmore interrupted.

"You've had your go, Sleath. What you're driving at, my dear, is that a long contract is no good unless the reward is large enough to justify it. Now, suppose I offered——"

"Thousand the first year, fifteen hundred the second, two thousand the third," said Sharp Dexter, as fast as he could go.

But Una was earning nearly fifty pounds a year at the High School. It justified her scorn. She made a despairing gesture—pouted and looked at F. S. Arbiter. He said nothing. He was busy working out the precise commercial value of that pout.

Between the other three men the argument and the competition became general. It was like an auction at which fantastic bidding was a feature. Una tucked in her chin and giggled. After all, it was tremendous fun.

"Now, come on, Miss Drayton, it's your turn to speak."

She became serious at once. Her dimples fled.

"All this is very exciting," she said, "but rather foolish. Here you are throwing offers at me as though I were a great actress with a great reputation. I know well enough I have what you'd call a film face, and on face value I look like a property. Well, p'r'aps I am, and p'r'aps not. It would be a pretty poor bargain for you if at the end of three months you found you'd spent your money on nothing, and it would be a pretty poor bargain for me if in that time I found I was all you imagine I may be. In view of that I reject all your offers, and I have a proposal to make of my own. I'll take one hundred pounds and I'll play lead in one film, and when it's over I'll dictate my own terms."

An angry dispute broke out among the three bidders. F. S. Arbiter said nothing.

"But that's silly, my dear girl." "How are you going to decide?" "I mean, if you destroy competition," etc.

"I suppose it *is* difficult," Una admitted; "but, as a matter of fact, I have decided."

And really the sum was a simple one. After "How Far is St. Helena?" the whole world would be waiting expectantly for F. S. Arbiter's next production.

"Will you offer me a part, Mr. Arbiter?"

A shaft of sunlight set fire to her entrance

'I wonder——" he said. Then: "Yes, I'll risk it."

The others rose and took their leave.

F. S. Arbiter paused and pondered. Presently he put his hand on her shoulder.

"Miss Drayton," he said, "I don't like you at all. You have about as much personality as a bicycle, and seem about as hard."

Una looked hurt. He watched the quick colour come and go.

"Oh, come," he said, "that's better. I dare say we shall make something of you in the end."

Then he took his hat and went out.

THAT evening when her father and mother came in (they had been sent out for the afternoon) Una made an announcement.

"Mother and father, you'll be glad to hear I've given up being a school teacher. My letter resigning is over there. You'll be glad to hear I've sold my curls and my eyelashes, my pout and my dimples, for one hundred pounds." Her voice went suddenly choky. "Isn't it too utterly vile and contemptible of me?"

And so the High School knew her no more.

A few of her pupils shed tears. The principal shook her head and was confident Una would regret the step she had taken, and Mr. Woolgar, who happened to meet her behind a screen of laurels in the front garden, said:—

"What about a bit of quiet lunch together," and heard enough about it to discourage the idea.

"THE Angel of the Off Shore Wind" was the title of F. S. Arbiter's new film. He was fond of Kipling quotations. The film starred Una Drayton. It was magnificent, a *tour de force*. Also it was beautiful. Una was the angel—everyone was agreed on that point. The screen had never revealed talent and beauty more excellently commingled. A darling and so clever! Those

her curls. Una knew where the afternoon sunlight pitched, and had delayed for the passing of a cloud.

adorable dimples, that pout! Such curls—and understanding. She was plucky, too—refusing to deputize to a substitute any of the dangers to which the character was exposed.

Una Drayton had no need to go forth and look for fame. It was hers in a single night. She captivated Continents, wrung the hearts of nations; and Heaven knows how many hitherto happy homes were wrecked in consequence of her release. The huge picture-going public acclaimed her as incomparably the best "sweetheart" the movies had ever provided.

Only Una herself, F. S. Arbiter, and one or two others knew what a swindle it all was.

Una liked F. S. Arbiter because he was every bit as frank and straightforward as she was herself. They used to meet overnight and discuss the scenes that would be taken next day. Their dialogue at the first of these meetings is worthy of record.

"I shall call you Una because I dislike surnames."

"I shall call you Mr. Arbiter," she replied.

"Yes, you will, because in matters of work I expect implicit obedience. You will do well to assume that anything I say is right. Very often it isn't right, but if we both assume it is we shall convince the public. Understand?"

"Perfectly."

"The difficulty in regard to you is whether or not we shall succeed in concealing your ignorance."

Una coloured.

"Don't interrupt, I haven't finished. By ignorance I imply your utter want of appreciation for those gifts which in your case Nature has been singularly lavish in bestowing."

"If you are referring to my looks——" Una began, but he interrupted her.

"My dear Una, you are absurdly proud of all sorts of things that don't matter at all. You are proud of being practical—aloof—of possessing a contempt for men and an easy confidence in your intellectual superiority. You regard it as creditable to be frank to a point of rudeness and to disavow the existence of sweetness and of romance. Over and above all that you are endowed with an attractive appearance and qualities out of proportion to those of any other girl I've met."

"I hope to prove, Mr. Arbiter, I shall have the intelligence to use them to our mutual advantage."

"It is very doubtful," he returned. "The eye of the camera is cruel and searching; it is a sure detector of false values. I realize with regret you are not fool enough to be genuinely natural, but what I don't know is whether you are clever enough to be apparently natural—whether you will be able to farm out your charms in the likeness of realities."

"That question only time can answer," said Una, "but don't forget the first time you saw me."

"In that doorway?"

She nodded, and he nodded too.

"Yes, it was admirable—also it was rather pitiable. You will remember I used the word 'clever' in commenting upon it."

"Well, look here," said Una. "I'll guarantee to switch on tears or dimples in such a fashion that no one would tell them from the real thing."

"Tch," said F. S. Arbiter. "*I* should always know. But can we cheat the public?"

"Yes," said Una, emphatically, and rose to go. And subsequent developments proved she was right.

"I wish you weren't such a fool, though," said F. S. Arbiter half to himself.

FOLLOWING on the tremendous success of "The Angel of the Off Shore Wind," from the greatest film producers in America came fantastic offers for the services of Una Drayton. It was generally agreed that she was worth any money.

She, however, stuck to F. S. Arbiter, not from motives of sentiment but because she liked working with him and approved his methods. There was, besides, another reason which she never revealed. It was contained in a shadowy doubt as to what extent he was responsible for her triumph and where, in her performance, his judgment was controlling her own.

When she conveyed her decision to remain, F. S. Arbiter's gratitude was not so pronounced as might have been expected.

"I'm not at all sure you are acting wisely," he said. "In many ways it would be better to get you over to America."

"Why?"

"Several reasons. The first being the comparative smallness of England. In America you're less likely to get known."

"But the film is a huge success in America already."

"I meant personally known. By the way, I suppose you're receiving numbers of social invitations?"

"Yes."

"Then take my advice and refuse 'em."

"Refuse them! Why?"

He shook his head.

"Dangerous, you know," he answered. "Artistes ought to be kept under lock and key, really. Pity to go about disappointing people."

Una flushed hotly. He had a knack of exciting in her evidences of genuine emotion.

Sometimes he employed the knack in the studio and made the camera-man turn like mad to capture the mood.

"Do you mean——" she began.

"I mean what I say. Pity to disappoint people. No good working hard and gaining a reputation for being a darling, only to destroy the whole fabric of the thing over the tea-cups."

"Sometimes," said Una, "I think you're impossible."

He took no notice of that and she proceeded :—

"Are you aware that never once have you congratulated me ?"

"For what ?" he asked. "For the fraud ?"

Once again she flushed.

"I should have thought at least you might have admitted that I do work hard."

"Very hard," he nodded.

"And that I am clever——"

"Oh, clever," he replied. "Yes, clever by all means."

But somehow it sounded more like a criticism than a compliment.

Una threw the stole of Russian sable across her shoulder and walked out, head in air. Looking through the window, F. S. Arbiter reflected that really she was too small to be out by herself.

"Silly little ass," he muttered, and went on with his work.

A RESPONSIBILITY arises to pursue Una into the social arena, which she entered largely in a spirit of pique. Her success on the screen assured a rapturous reception in the houses of the elect. She was invited everywhere, and without allowing these entertainments to interfere with her professional avocation she went everywhere. And wherever she went there was a sensation. The flower and chivalry of Britain tumbled over one another in an effort to attract her attention.

Una, however, favoured no one and refused to grant *tête-à-tête*. Her appearance was of course adorable, but after a while it came to be admitted that her manner was a shade disappointing. No one expected so obvious a darling to talk practical politics over the dinner-table or to create about herself a barrier of ice. She was aloof—superior—a tiny bit condescending. She was, in fact, a contradiction in terms. Those whose hearts had been torn by the radiance of her curls, the allurement of her pout and dimples as seen upon the films, found her in real life a very precise young lady with a contempt for those blandishments which upon the screen would set her lashes sweeping, her little bosom heaving, and the tears welling over the lower lids of her eyes. Painful as it is to record, after meeting her many were driven to revisit the Picture Theatre for the purpose of reinstating their original impressions of innocence and susceptibility.

The women were first to discover that the Una of the films was a very different person to the Una of every day. Women are better equipped for making such discoveries, since men are rarely able to see anything deeper than skin. But after a while a number of erstwhile admirers shrugged their shoulders and, remarking that nothing was doing, rescinded their proposals of marriage and retired into obscurity.

"All of which," F. S. Arbiter observed, "is damaging to business."

"But you wouldn't have me encourage people I've a contempt for ?" Una retorted.

"Why despise clean and wholesome admiration backed by a proposal of marriage ?"

"Because I hate sentimentality. They must take me as I am or not at all."

"Right !" said F. S. Arbiter. "And suppose I took you as you are on the film, what then ?"

"That's ridiculous. Of course, one must give the public what they want."

"The public is only one man, one woman, and one child multiplied over and over again, and their wants added up and refined down amount to a little sweetness, a little excitement, a little fun, and a bit of romance."

"Precisely," said Una. "And to provide that sweetness someone has got to buy the sugar, and to provide the excitement someone has got to get what they don't expect. The fun is sure to be at someone else's expense, and as for the romance——"

"Since you are sublimely ignorant about romance," he cut in, "I wouldn't waste time discussing it."

"That from you !" said Una. "The most practical man I've ever met."

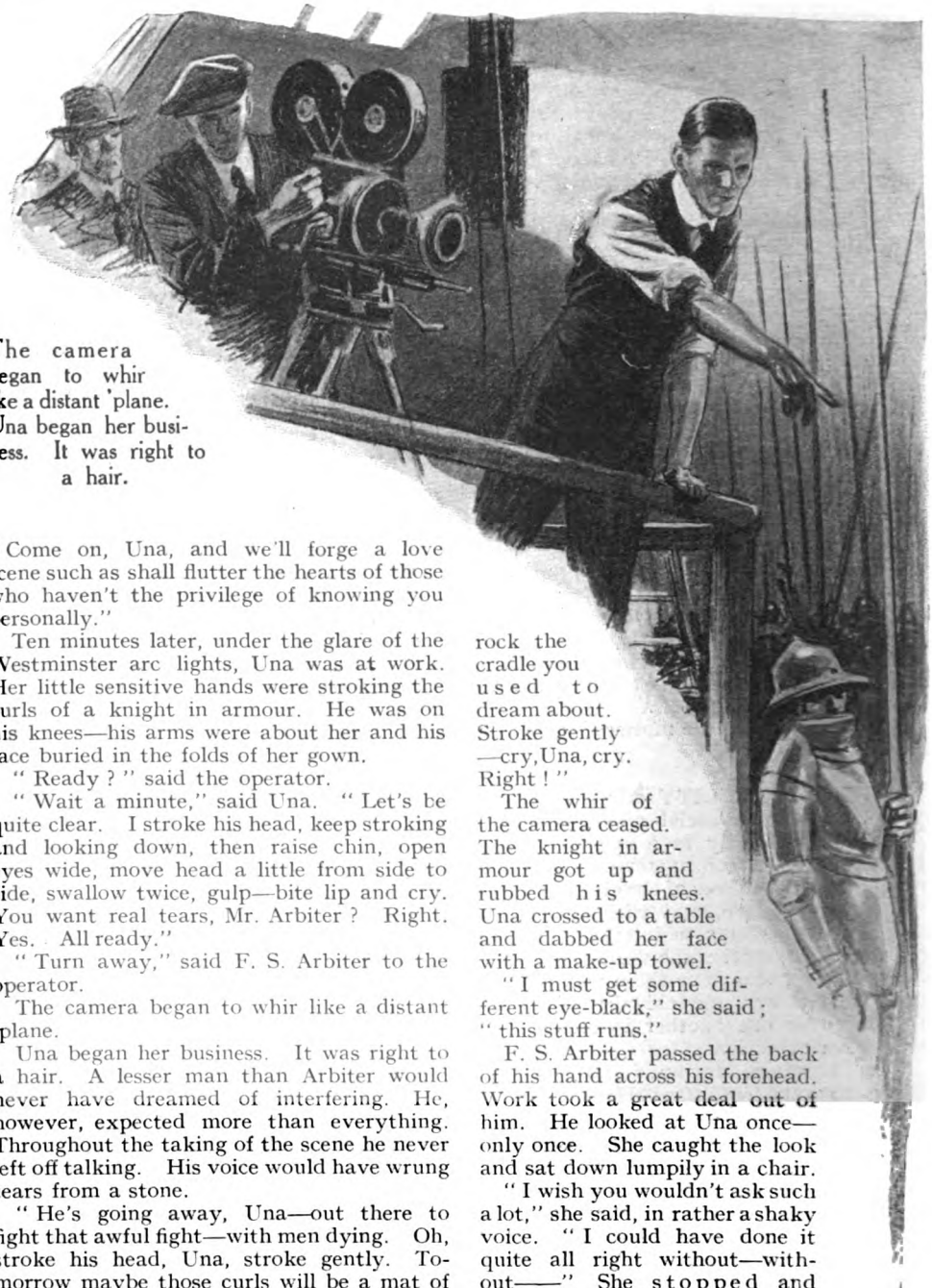
"Oh, certainly. I'm a kind of universal provider with a gift for anticipating a customer's wants."

"Practical common-sense is worth all the other rubbish in life," was Una's crisp conclusion to the argument.

But she could not choose but worry a little that one by one her admirers fell away.

THE head of the Antiquarian Search Department entered the office and announced that the scene in the reconstructed Pevensey Castle had been set to his satisfaction and all was ready for taking.

"Come on, then," said F. S. Arbiter.



The camera began to whir like a distant 'plane. Una began her business. It was right to a hair.

"Come on, Una, and we'll forge a love scene such as shall flutter the hearts of those who haven't the privilege of knowing you personally."

Ten minutes later, under the glare of the Westminster arc lights, Una was at work. Her little sensitive hands were stroking the curls of a knight in armour. He was on his knees—his arms were about her and his face buried in the folds of her gown.

"Ready?" said the operator.

"Wait a minute," said Una. "Let's be quite clear. I stroke his head, keep stroking and looking down, then raise chin, open eyes wide, move head a little from side to side, swallow twice, gulp—bite lip and cry. You want real tears, Mr. Arbiter? Right. Yes. All ready."

"Turn away," said F. S. Arbiter to the operator.

The camera began to whir like a distant 'plane.

Una began her business. It was right to a hair. A lesser man than Arbiter would never have dreamed of interfering. He, however, expected more than everything. Throughout the taking of the scene he never left off talking. His voice would have wrung tears from a stone.

"He's going away, Una—out there to fight that awful fight—with men dying. Oh, stroke his head, Una, stroke gently. Tomorrow maybe those curls will be a mat of blood. Think, Una, your lover dead—cold in ugly death. Never any more those strong arms round you. Can you breathe, Una?—doesn't the breath knot in your throat?—doesn't your heart beat and break and break? What's it matter if you cry? Let the tears fall—let 'em fall, hot tears on your hands—little hands that never now will rock the cradle you used to dream about. Stroke gently—cry, Una, cry. Right!"

The whir of the camera ceased. The knight in armour got up and rubbed his knees. Una crossed to a table and dabbed her face with a make-up towel.

"I must get some different eye-black," she said; "this stuff runs."

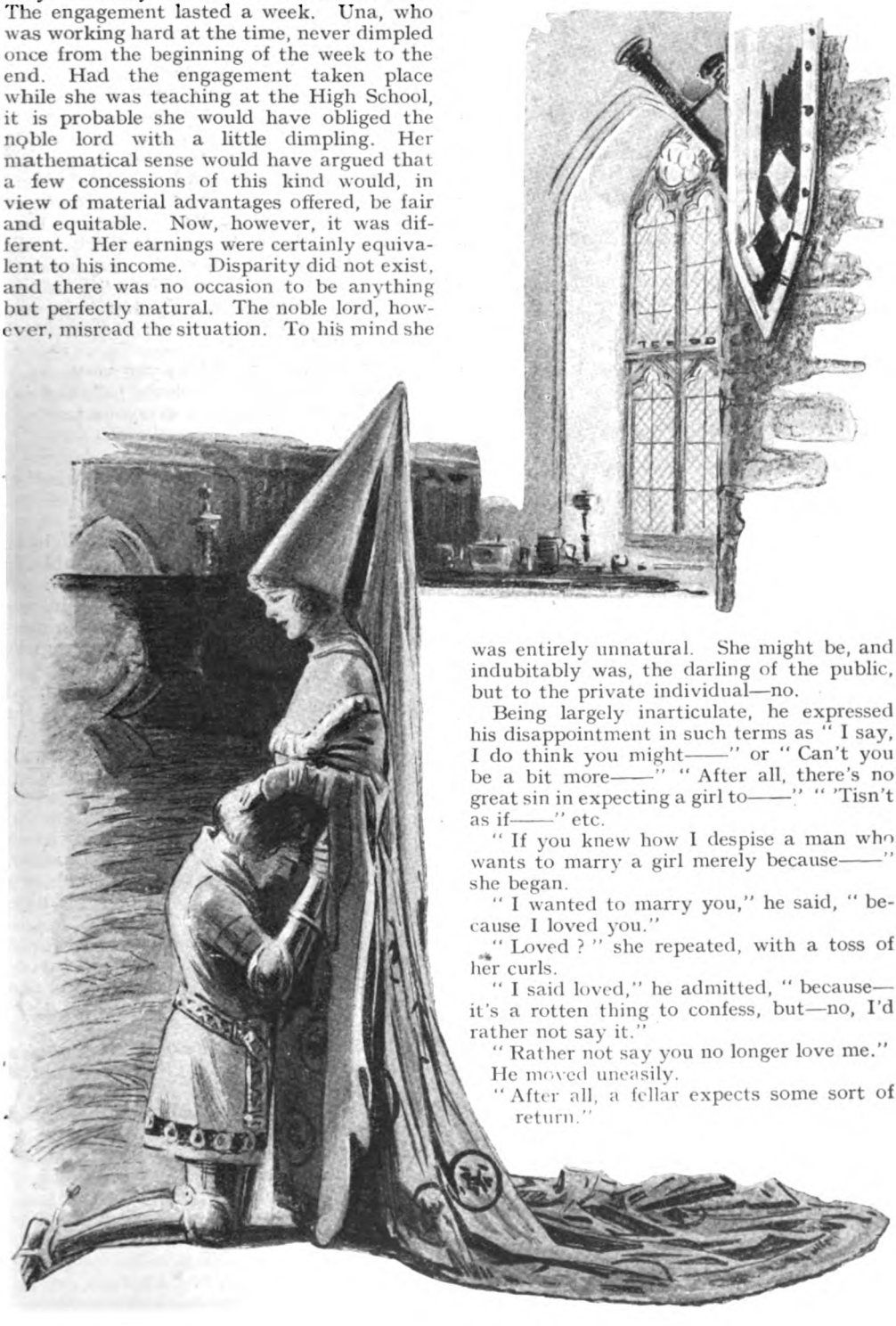
F. S. Arbiter passed the back of his hand across his forehead. Work took a great deal out of him. He looked at Una once—only once. She caught the look and sat down lumpily in a chair.

"I wish you wouldn't ask such a lot," she said, in rather a shaky voice. "I could have done it quite all right without—without——" She stopped and caught her breath. "I don't feel well. I——" Her lower lip quivered, then out it shot like a child's who is going to cry.

F. S. Arbiter walked out of the studio with his hands in his pockets.

That night Una accepted a proposal of marriage from Lord Neville Palatine, because

very suddenly she hated F. S. Arbiter. The engagement lasted a week. Una, who was working hard at the time, never dimpled once from the beginning of the week to the end. Had the engagement taken place while she was teaching at the High School, it is probable she would have obliged the noble lord with a little dimpling. Her mathematical sense would have argued that a few concessions of this kind would, in view of material advantages offered, be fair and equitable. Now, however, it was different. Her earnings were certainly equivalent to his income. Disparity did not exist, and there was no occasion to be anything but perfectly natural. The noble lord, however, misread the situation. To his mind she



was entirely unnatural. She might be, and indubitably was, the darling of the public, but to the private individual—no.

Being largely inarticulate, he expressed his disappointment in such terms as "I say, I do think you might——" or "Can't you be a bit more——" "After all, there's no great sin in expecting a girl to——" "'Tisn't as if——" etc.

"If you knew how I despise a man who wants to marry a girl merely because——" she began.

"I wanted to marry you," he said, "because I loved you."

"Loved?" she repeated, with a toss of her curls.

"I said loved," he admitted, "because—it's a rotten thing to confess, but—no, I'd rather not say it."

"Rather not say you no longer love me."

He moved uneasily.

"After all, a fellar expects some sort of return."

"I see. Then suppose I return your freedom, with an apology for having kept it so long?"

"It's frightfully decent of you," he said. And dashed for his hat.

F. S. ARBITER was entirely unmoved at the news of the engagement.

"Oh, really!" was all he had said. "I hope he teaches you something."

All his attention was centred upon finishing the mediæval film. The last scene was taken on the day after the engagement was broken off. Una had told no one. She played her scenes that morning with a curiously wistful air which was as a rule terribly difficult to woo from her. F. S. Arbiter never interfered once, but at the conclusion he nodded his head rather ruefully and remarked:—

"So he has, then?"

He refused to explain what he meant by the words.

Later in the day he asked Una to come to his office.

"Una."

"Yes?"

"You must look out for a new engagement."

She could not restrain an angry exclamation.

"How dare you?" she demanded.

"I merely mean that I've made up my mind to go round the world for a year. And I'm shutting up shop."

"Oh! I thought—— Yes, but why?"

"I want to shake off old ideas."

"Shall you be doing any productions?"

"I might."

Una thought for a moment.

"I wouldn't mind going round the world."

There was a wistful quality in her voice.

He started.

"Eh? But how about your—er—this—what's his name?"

"That's off," said Una.

"Is it? Oh!" He rose, and crossing to the window looked out. She could not see the expression on his face.

"But even so," he said, half to himself, "I don't see why I shouldn't go round the world."

"You said you *were* going."

"Well, p'r'aps I shall. Might do one more film first. That Admiralty film, you know."

"But that was for me."

"Yes, of course."

"Then you don't want me to take another engagement?"

"What? No. Yes, I do, though."

"I wish you'd say what you mean."

He turned and looked at her.

"How would you care to marry me?"

Una drew herself up.

"Are you being amusing?" she asked.

"It's very doubtful; but seriously, what about it?"

She said nothing and he went on:—

"We work together very well—are used to each other. Seems to me a very sensible arrangement. Besides, between us we ought to be able to conceal your true disposition."

"Is that an essential?" she asked.

"I think so. A very little more of the same sort of publicity as you've been dishing out these last few months would give away the whole show."

"Do you know," said Una, "I believe sometimes you deliberately try to annoy me."

He smiled.

"Absurd notion. I like you very much. I think you are a very clever girl, but it's natural I shouldn't want everyone to share the knowledge."

Una lit a cigarette.

"I'm wondering," she said, "whether I ought to marry you."

"Think it over."

"But if I did marry you you'd have to understand clearly that it would be useless to expect anything from me. I should continue to do my work, hold my own views, and conduct my own life precisely as before. I'm not like other girls, you see."

"Come," he said, "that's very fair. I would never have dreamed of asking as much as that."

"I could never be subject to any man's will or pleasure."

F. S. Arbiter nodded gravely.

"I think it's marvellous to be able to speak with such accurate foreknowledge of the future, to know oneself so intimately. For my part I am content to take stock of a day's happenings at the end of each day. It's jolly being able to prophesy."

"If you care to marry me on those terms."

"Suit me admirably. Do we kiss one another?"

"You may kiss me if you like."

He laughed. "No, it's a shame; you're tired and I've lots to do. Run along home and have a good rest."

Una went out slowly. Life was behaving very queerly to her and she to life. She could not understand why she had consented to marry F. S. Arbiter—or for that matter to marry anyone. It was very curious. When she arrived home she took a sheet of notepaper from the rack to write and tell him she had changed her mind; but the letter was never written. After all, as he had said, it was a most sensible arrangement.

THE wedding was a very quiet affair.

F. S. Arbiter was true to his promise and expected no more from Una after marriage than before. He did not hamper her movements nor her thoughts, and he criticized neither. They went their own ways sublimely indifferent to each other. Most satisfactory it was. Una saw that her wishes were being observed in the spirit and the letter and congratulated herself that it should be so. And the more she congratulated herself the more irritable she became—which, if you come to consider it, was most unreasonable. When she tried to determine the reason for her irritability she got nowhere beyond a vague sense of increasing loneliness and a faint impression that, though one may dictate to a man what he must or must not do, one is not always grateful by his obedience to the command.

Una devoted from twenty minutes to nine till nine o'clock to running the house. She was always at the studio at a quarter-past. It was astonishing the amount of domestic efficiency she crammed into that brief period of time. This is best emphasized by the statement that servants gave notice by shoals. It offended them, they agreed, to be treated like bits of machinery by someone who, to judge by her outward appearance, ought to know better.

"Sitting there under all those curls and shooting off orders like a sergeant-major. It won't suit me and I don't care oo 'ears me say so." This was the dictum of the cook, a big, motherly person who had brought to the kitchen a large heart and fond belief, fostered by the movies, that her time would be spent frustrating an adorable child mistress from committing raids upon the jam.

It was a great nuisance, the servants behaving in this fashion. Una told her husband it was a nuisance. F. S. Arbiter said nothing. He had been doing a lot of that since their marriage. He had, in fact, carried the saying of nothing to lengths. Their mutual breakfast table daily "featured" F. S. Arbiter saying nothing. After a while it became a little bit galling to Una. It was not as if he was incapable of saying more than nothing. Often at the studio he said so much that she was almost driven to lose her temper. He didn't seem to care how much he upset her during working hours. He called on her dimples by name and bade them "dimp"—he shook his fists at her lashes and bade them sweep. In pathetic scenes he said such dreadful things that sometimes, although she would never have dreamed of admitting it, she actually wept. Once, at the end of a very trying day, he beat his head with closed fists and cried:—

"This damned counterfeit business is killing me—killing me."

She was startled into asking:—

"Do you mean I've muddled the scene?"

"What? No. The scene's all right, or looks all right—but why in the name of Heaven you can't——" He broke off sharply. "Oh, well, doesn't matter."

And then at home he would say nothing.

Now Una was the least sentimental person in the world, but the loss of a good cook is a serious matter. A man of the meanest intelligence should realize that at such times sympathy is expected.

"It isn't as if cooks are easy to get," said Una.

"Nurses are even more difficult," he volunteered.

"I cannot see what nurses have to do with it."

"Nothing at all."

"Then why speak of nurses?"

F. S. Arbiter shrugged his shoulders.

"I was trying to look at the bright side of things."

"If you can find comfort," remarked Una, "in congratulating yourself we haven't lost a nurse that we haven't got you're welcome to it." And she tapped her foot.

F. S. Arbiter looked at his wife and smiled.

"Well, really!" said Una and tossed her curls.

Whereupon he put his head on one side and regarded her critically.

Una blinked her eyes and looked away. He pursed his lips as though in thought, but he said nothing.

To emphasize displeasure Una bit the back of her hand and pouted prodigiously. It was the pout, the toss, the blink, and the bite which had captivated the heart of nations. Una was aware of this. She knew that she was employing, deliberately and for the first time against her husband, those despised weapons which had carved her pathway to fame. To win his attention she had resorted to artifice and caprice. Her battery of feminine wiles had been discharged.

The result was electrifying. For a moment he sat in silence, then seizing the arms of his chair he sprang to his feet and thundered:—

"Never do that again—d'you understand?—never again. Definitely and absolutely I forbid it."

"Forbid what?"

He jerked his head angrily.

"I told you once I should always know, and I meant what I said. You suggested the conditions of our marriage and there was a definite understanding that you would not interfere with its colourless course by introducing the studio tricks on which your reputation has been founded."

"It strikes me," said Una, loftily, "you are talking rubbish."

"No," said he. "I am forbidding its importation into this house. That I am so far lost to honour as to have exploited your counterfeit attractions to a credulous world is a disgrace I accept with humility, but by all the stars, Una—and I refer to the dear, genuine little stars it has been my privilege to work with in the past—by all the stars I am determined to keep my home clean, honest, and sincere."

"Yes, but——" she began.

He waved her down.

"I will not have the ice of this refrigerator melted by false fires. You have declared for a certain policy—very good, stick to it." And he marched from the room.

AFTER the front door had slammed Una slowly mounted the stairs. Her objective was the bedroom—her intention, although she scarcely realized it, was to cry. There is a powerful magnetism between tears and pillow-slips, a magnetism to which every true woman sooner or later responds. For all practical purposes she might as favourably cry on a piano stool, but she rarely does. For the reception of tears civilization has supplied two alternatives—a man's shoulder and one's own pillow, and failing the convenient presence of the former, the latter is inevitably employed.

So Una went upstairs to cry, and on the first landing she met the cook. The cook at once became rigid, sucked in her round cheeks, and tried to make a kind old mouth look grim. The result was plain and pathetic. Una would much rather have been met with a smile—much rather. The expression of the cook suggested a distrustful person wearing a waterproof in spite of persistent sunshine. All over the world were hundreds of people who, on recognizing their favourite, would light up with smiles. But these people didn't know her; the cook did. The cook was privy to the magnificent, or should one say regrettable, fact that Una was a practical, self-contained, hard, mathematical, precise little creature who sold her favours and did not give them away.

A new perspective of herself arose and filled her with a sense of sudden shame. Was not this trafficking of pouts and dimples a sign of wantonness?

Blushing to the eyebrows, she hastened past the cook to her own room. A housemaid was making the bed.

"If you wish to come in, madam——" said the housemaid.

"No, please don't bother," said Una, and ran downstairs again.

The housemaid was perplexed. She stood a long time with a bolster in her arms.

In the hall Una again met the cook, who was designing to polish the knocker. Once more the cook "prepared to receive cavalry."

"Isn't it a lovely day?" said Una.

The cook supposed so—in silence—with moving lips.

Una then said:—

"We enjoyed that jam puff you made last night—I'm sorry you're going away."

The polish slipped from the cook's hand, rattled down the front steps, and rolled on to the pavement. A small boy, proceeding at speed on a single roller skate, encountered it—fell and cut his chin. The cook gathered up the injured skater, bore him to the back door, and healed his wounds with a portion of the jam puff which had been left over. It was observed by the sink that a tear fell from the cook upon the teak surround. Observe the far-reaching effects of one touch of nature—a tear was shed, a chin was cut, a jam puff was eaten, and a knocker went uncleaned.

Una retreated into the sitting-room, where she lay on the sofa with her knees up. She wanted to cry but she could not, for the sofa had no pleasant associations. She stared over the top of her knees, using them as a back sight, at a "still" of herself in "The Angel of the Offshore Wind." It revealed her in a wistful mood, framed in a cottage doorway, looking out over the sea.

Staring at the "still," Una knew why people loved her and why she was their darling. It was because she was gentle, kind, sensitive. It was because she looked as if she was only waiting to rock a cradle. For an absurd moment the Una of herself—the economically domestic, the eugenically practical, mathematical Una of everyday—longed for the Una of the films to step from the frame and cuddle alongside her on the sofa.

"But she couldn't," said the Una of herself.

The Una of the films would never associate with the wanton little trull whose cheques were drawn on a bank of counterfeit emotions.

A telephone bell rang. It was the private wire from the studio. Una glanced at the clock. She was half an hour late. A crowd of five hundred supers at one pound a day, and seventeen principals at five to twenty-five pounds a day, would be kicking their heels, waiting her arrival. Well, let them wait. For once in her life she would not be ruled by principles of domestic economy. The bell screamed—she let it scream. Presently it got tired of screaming. Una continued to stare at the "still," using her knees as a back sight.

He sprang to his feet and thundered: "Never do that again—d'you understand?—never again. Definitely and absolutely I forbid it."

Presently came a thunderous attack on the uncleaned knocker. One of the studio staff entered excitedly.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Drayton, but everyone's waiting for you," he gasped.

"They can," said Una.

"But, Miss Drayton——"

"Oh, go away!" she cried.

And he could not afford to disobey.

Some more screaming then from the telephone bell, and after that F. S. Arbiter in person.

"I won't," said Una.

"You will," he replied, "if I have to carry you myself."

Una pouted.

"I've already spoken about that," he said.

It is perfectly maddening to have a pout pointed at. Una tossed her curls this way, that way, to and fro.

"I hate you—hate you!" she cried.

"Save it up till we get to the studio," he said. "You'll want every bit of it in this scene."

Una sobered suddenly.

"Very well," she said. "Very well. I will come, but you'll be sorry."

Hatless she raced down the steps and flung herself into the waiting car, chin down, a defensive shoulder raised. F. S. Arbiter followed her grimly.

The car entered the studio grounds and drove along the cobbles of the reconstructed seaport town. The hired inhabitants smiled and waved their hands. One of the principals came up, opened the door, and helped Una to alight.

"We were afraid you were ill," he said.

"No," replied Una, with absolute frankness, "I was sulking."

Some twenty spectators heard the remark and were staggered. It sped from mouth to mouth, and within three minutes everyone was repeating it.

To sulk is evidence of a mood, and Una was never moody. That was one of the chief complaints against her.

"So unwomanly being always the same."

Even F. S. Arbiter looked astonished.

"We've wasted time enough," said he. "Let's get on."

THE giant crowd was marshalled, doors and windows were filled and pavements lined.

"Price of Admiralty" was the title of the film. The situation was this. The lover of Una, a common A.B., by unprecedented daring had saved the flagship from disaster and by report had perished in the act. The simple folk of Falmouth, in ecstasy at the courage of their fellow-townsman, had placed his weeping *fiancée* in a carriage and were dragging her through the streets. Hers was a difficult task, which demanded a commingling of grief and glory, of personal loss and patriotic gain.

The cost of manufacturing this scene and engaging the company was between two and three thousand pounds. Upon its success depended the success of the film—and success was bound up in the way Una played her part. It was a big responsibility, but she was unawed, for F. S. Arbiter had explained exactly what she had to do. In all undertakings of this kind, however, there is a personal element.

Through a megaphone one of F. S. Arbiter's lieutenants roared:—

"Places everybody. Start cheers when Mr. Arbiter fires the first shot. Hush down as the carriage goes by. No woman to start weeping until they get the second shot. Stand by."

Una came out of a dressing-room behind the camera platform. There was a faint and rather peculiar smile on her lips. F. S. Arbiter saw it out of the corner of his eye and touched her sleeve.

"Please don't stop me," she said. "We've wasted enough time already."

His fingers fastened on the fabric of her gown.

"Una," he whispered.

She tried to draw away, but he would not let her.

"If you spoil this scene, it won't anger me."

She started and coloured under her make-up.

"Apart from the loss of time and money I should count it a gain, Una."

"I don't know what you mean."

"I think you do. Una, I don't mind being wounded by a woman's weapons. It 'ud be a change."

She tugged at her dress, but he held it fast.

"Do you dare to suggest I mean to spoil the scene?"

"You mean to try," he nodded. "Don't believe you can hide anything from me. It was in your head to drive through that crowd with a stone-cold face. Well, it won't matter if you do."

"Won't it?"

"No, because you can't—because all the while you'll be thinking what you stand to lose."

There was a silence; then:—

"I'll show you if I can or can't," she said.

"Very well," said F. S. Arbiter. "Have a try. You'll fail. In the end emotion rules us all."

She broke from him and ran to where the carriage was waiting two hundred yards away. Her heart was beating wildly, her throat burnt inside.

"I want three more cameras," shouted F. S. Arbiter. "One behind that awning, another in that porch, and the third fifteen feet behind this one, where the carriage turns."

"But that's outside the picture, guv'nor," said his lieutenant. "It'll catch our framework."

"Let it," said F. S. Arbiter.

The operators fled to their stations and signalled readiness.

The pistol cracked sharply; the crowd stirred and cheered. Heads and bunting appeared at windows. The town band, heralded by racing urchins, swung down the street. Came then the Mayor and Aldermen, came then bluejackets, arm-in-arm and singing, and followed by men who danced in the roadway and staggered under burdens of banners and drink—and then a hush, an emptiness, a something of awe.

"But aren't you going to have your head

on my shoulder, Miss Drayton ? " asked the old man who played her father and was sitting beside her in the carriage.

" No," she said.

The men on the ropes took up the strain and the carriage began to move.

LIKE a rock, and looking neither to right nor left, sat Una Drayton, her face utterly immobile, her every attention concentrated on revealing no manner of emotion whatsoever. The old man stared at her with frightful apprehension, nervousness passing in waves across his countenance.

Perched on a high rostrum, F. S. Arbiter watched the little white statue drawn down the street of make-belief. At the distance it seemed that the expression never changed, yet as the carriage passed various sections of the crowd he could see a profound effect was being produced upon them. Their silence—their quiescence—was self-imposed, and not the result of rehearsal. He saw how the hands of some of the women went to their throats—he could hear coughing among the men.

The carriage approached, and then he saw that Una's face was not entirely immobile. There was the veriest twitch at the corners of her mouth, a hint of trembling on her lower lip. In her eyes, too, were signs of an inward battle. As she came level with him she looked up and their eyes met for the briefest instant. She sought to telegraph the word " There ! "

The carriage passed under the framework upon which the camera was standing, and turned away to the right. The fourth camera, hidden behind the rhododendrons, secured a picture of Una alighting and making a dash for her dressing-room.

" I say, guv'nor," said the lieutenant, " that was all different. Nothing you arranged yesterday was done. Shall you re-take ? "

" No," said F. S. Arbiter. " Get those spools developed at once. I want to see 'em directly." He picked up a megaphone. " The crowd can dismiss."

Someone touched his arm. It was Una.

" I—I'm sorry," she said, " but—you—— Tell them to stay. I'll do it properly—I will, really."

" No, thank you."

" But——"

" I shall not re-take."

She was looking down at the ground.

" May I go home ? " she asked.

" If you wish—but I am having the scene developed. I would like you to stop and see it."

She hesitated.

" Very well." Then, in a sudden burst : " Oh, I'd much rather you lost your temper with me ! "

He put an arm through hers and gently led her to his office, where he placed her in an armchair and rang the bell for some hot milk. Presently he said :—

" Why should I lose my temper, anyway ? "

" It was wicked and beastly of me."

" As to that," he said, " we must delay judgment until the results are before us."

" Let them destroy it," she begged.

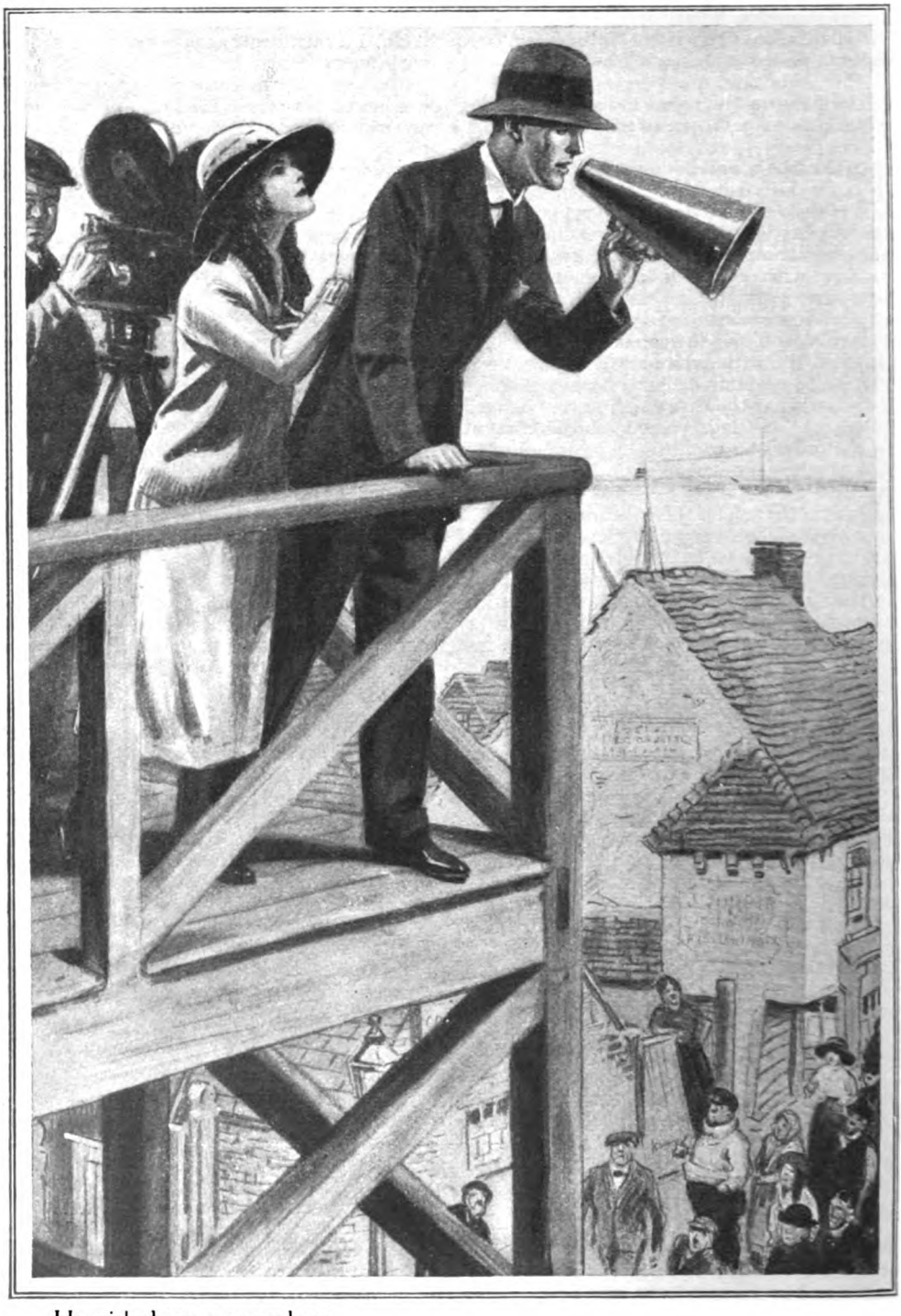
He shook his head.

" Destroy the first film of the real Una ? On no account. Put your feet on that hassock. You look tired."

Her long lashes drooped and lay across the curve of her cheeks. She looked marvellously pretty. A shaft of sunlight swept across her curls, which shone like fairy candles. She didn't know the sun's rays pitched on the back of that chair at this particular hour.

" Una," said F. S. Arbiter, " have you ever thought of beauty as a thing to be and not to see—a thing to give and not to sell—a thing to live and a thing to share ? I have more or less devoted my life to thinking about beauty—striving to find it, develop it, and give the results to the world to enjoy. It's kept me busy, and it's taught me a few things by the way. It's taught me that outward beauty is ever a token of inward beauty—of some simple, lovely emotion hidden beneath the garment of the wearer. Sometimes it's hidden very deep, so deep as to be almost out of reach. Again it ripples over the surface like wind across a field of corn. Wherever beauty is there live those lovely emotions in partnership. Real gaiety compelling the lightning smile—a real heart-ache starting the tear—real sunshine firing the curls with light. We may govern and control our thoughts—fit out our minds for action—refine and tutor our intelligences, and yet underneath our learning is a mightier force ruling all things educated and acquired. And it springs, I think, from those simple, lovely emotions whose source is beauty. Think ! That irresistible drop of water which we call a tear has a power greater than brain and tissue can command—it will rise and force the lock-gates of reserve or common sense. That impulse of laughter makes a jest of indifference and a flowery pathway across the grimmest dial. Sincerity, humour, kindness, sympathy, love, these are beauty's components, my dear, and the greatest wisdom we can possess is to discover how best to link arms with the full company and make of each a daily comrade."

He stopped and cleared his throat.



He picked up a megaphone.

"The crowd can dismiss."

Someone touched his arm. It was Una. "I'm sorry," she said. "Tell them to stay. I'll do it properly—I will, really."

"The worst of me," he said, "is that when I start talking I always say too much."

Una looked up with a fleeting smile.

"No, it's all right, I liked it," she said. "I liked it awfully, and I *am* sorry I spoiled the picture."

"Little idiot!" he exclaimed; "you only began to be born this morning."

Una tossed her head—it was a genuine toss—genuine, too, was the pout which accompanied the action.

"I spoilt it," she repeated.

F. S. Arbiter shrugged his shoulders.

"Very well," he allowed, "but, if you're right, every belief I cherish is broken into little pieces, and so far as we are concerned our old life——"

"Finishes?" she gasped, nervously.

"No," he muttered, so low as to be inaudible, "goes on."

SOMEONE with a blue apron and mahogany-coloured hands knocked and entered.

"Developed, sir," he said.

F. S. Arbiter turned to his wife.

"Go and see for yourself."

"I'm frightened," she said. "Come with me."

He shook his head.

Una went out tremblingly.

It was a puzzled Una who made her way home shortly afterwards and flopped down on the couch in the sitting-room—the couch which they both occupied—at different times, but never together.

To her had been accorded a strange experience. She had seen herself, not, as usual, commanding a legion of sham emotions, but commanded by real ones.

The six cameras posted by F. S. Arbiter at different points had captured the full range of her feelings and exposed them mercilessly, and every one of them was true of the scene she played in. She saw herself battling to preserve a proud, unmoved front, but the battle was more evident than the immobility. She read in her features an agony of loss—it might have been the loss of her film lover—or a real one—the loss of a reputation or of one man's esteem. The cold light she had bidden to shine from her eyes was misted with unshed tears. Her effort to destroy was a creation.

So F. S. Arbiter was right, as he had told her he would be right. Came that piece of the picture where she had glanced up and caught his eye. There was no defiance—only something terribly plaintive in the look she gave him. The remnant of her pride thanked Heaven that the ordeal was over—that she had passed out of the eye of the camera and the final concession to emotion would not be revealed. She was wrong. A voice said:—

"There's this strip, Miss Drayton."

The projector flickered again. There was the carriage turning to the right with the camera rostrum in the background and the figures of F. S. Arbiter and his operators silhouetted against the sky. And there was she——

It was too cruel—too merciless to have hidden that last camera in the rhododendrons. Its record was callously searching. She had not thought anyone could see her face—she did not think anyone save herself was aware of the complete *volte-face* of her emotions—the crumpling of the mask she had worn into a hundred twists and tatters of grief. Her little figure as she ran for the sanctuary of her dressing-room was one of the most cryworthy sights Una had ever seen.

So F. S. Arbiter was right. Emotion conquered everything in the long run.

And suddenly Una, lying on the sofa and staring over her drawn-up knees, was glad that he was right—gloried in the sudden knowledge of her new discovery—in the invincibility, the utter omnipotence of emotion.

It came to her blindingly as the most marvellously lovely thing anyone could possibly know. With a single sweep it smote into insignificance every other particle of knowledge she possessed.

And if she was beautiful before the realization, she was radiant afterwards.

It so happened that F. S. Arbiter walked into the room at that moment. Very grave he was looking.

"You saw?" he said.

She nodded.

"Your reputation is shattered, Una."

Again she nodded, and her dimples were playing tricks like children who are out of hand.

"The old one," she corrected him.

F. S. Arbiter sighed heavily, but a smile was trying to force its way through the grim line of his mouth—trying and succeeding.

"What's to be done?" he asked.

Una beckoned to him.

"Come here, I want to whisper."

Then she put her arms round his neck and kissed him and kissed him and kissed him.

F. S. Arbiter said nothing.

After that they sat on the sofa together.

MY ROYAL SITTERS

A SYMPOSIUM OF ARTISTS WHO HAVE PAINTED THE ROYAL FAMILY.

In our last Christmas Number we had the pleasure of publishing an article entitled "Painting the Prince," in which a number of artists gave their impression of the Prince of Wales as a sitter. We now follow up this article by another dealing with the King and Queen and other members of the Royal Family, which our readers will find no less interesting. We should like to draw special attention to the fact that many of the pictures are now reproduced for the first time.

By CECIL CUTLER.

SOON after the late King Edward's death, he having been very kind and sympathetic to me and my work, giving me the commissions to paint his portraits as Prince of Wales and as King, and also purchasing other works of mine, I wrote for permission to sketch King George whilst out shooting at Sandringham. To this I received a favourable reply, to the effect that the King would have no objection to my making sketches while he was shooting. The Equerry-in-Waiting furnished me with the dates of the shoots at Sandringham, so down I went, putting up at the village of Dersingham with some very old friends of mine who were officially connected with the Royal Household. On my arrival I telephoned to Lord Charles Fitzmaurice, the Equerry-in-Waiting at the time, to ascertain where the shooting was taking place on the morrow, and received full directions. It was a place beginning with A, about three miles from Sandringham. Off I went in new "plus-fours" with a sketch-book and other materials, and (needless to say) my very old and seasoned briar pipe, my companion in many a walk.

Presently a car flashed past, then another, bristling with guns. Some two miles farther I met a native who told me where the guns were. Lord Charles Fitzmaurice, whom I saw immediately, said: "The King is just shooting through these turnips and working in our direction, and I will tell him that you are here." His Majesty, in shaking hands, said: "I passed you on the road." I was then told to walk with the King which I did, making notes from time to time, and beginning thoroughly to enjoy my work. "Let me see what you are doing," said the King. My notes, consisting chiefly of a few scratches and a half a page of shorthand, seemed to interest him. "I see you write shorthand," he observed. "Yes, sir," I replied, "and I have material here already that will last me for the rest of my lifetime!"

The guns were now taking up their positions, so there was no more work for a time. I remained behind with the three loaders, and became interested in the shooting. The King kept three guns of the old hammer type pretty busy, and in a flush-over accounted for five pheasants with the right and left shots and the third gun swung round in time for a fifth in the tail. Again my thoughts wandered back to my work, and so busy was I that, when the King swung round again and failed to fire, I remarked, perfectly innocently: "Why didn't the King shoot?" "Because your head was in the way," was the reply. Needless to say, no more work was done for some little time, and, like Brer Rabbit, I "lay low."

During the next rest the King sat on his shooting seat while I turned my attention to studying his face. A cigarette smoked in an amber and gold holder seemed to bring a happy expression to my sitter's face, and I saw white teeth appear between the moustache and the clouds of smoke. "There is a wad in the centre of this little gold ball to absorb the nicotine," he said.

On again to another covert and more

shooting, and then an adjournment for lunch. After that my attention wandered somewhat, but I had a good day. On two other days I walked with the guns. On the Saturday evening following I made my adieu to His Majesty. "Sorry you have had such a wet time," he said; but the time was a time I shall never forget. The portrait of the King was completed and published by a Bond Street firm, and Her Majesty the Queen did me the honour of purchasing the original.

By W. B. E. RANKEN, R.I., V.P.R.O.I.

When I first heard that the Queen wanted me to paint her, I thought that it was a mistake. I knew I was to paint two interiors of Windsor Castle for the famous Dolls' House, which is certainly one of the most wonderful bits of craftsmanship of modern times, and for which I had already painted a large flower-piece six inches square to hang over the dining-room sideboard; but I had not heard anything about painting Her Majesty. I was away from my London studio and had not received a letter on the subject which had been following me about for some days, and when I got to my house at Eversley I was much surprised to get a command by telegram to go to Windsor on the following day. I dashed off to London then and there, so as to be ready to catch an early train in the morning, for Royalties are early risers, and I had to get my Sunday clothes, which were in London. A tail-coat, I thought, was essential.

I was met at Windsor station by a large and impressive footman. I have never been able to get quite used to footmen; they are so very large and splendid and nonchalant. The footman led the way to a brougham with a pair of greys, and I was driven up to the Castle feeling very important.

I think it was largely owing to Princess Christian, whose recent death has been a grief to all who knew her, that Her Majesty decided to get me to paint her, for I had recently been painting the Princess, and the Queen had seen and liked the picture. Fortunately for me, she and Princess Helena Victoria were staying at the Castle at the time, and took charge of me until Her Majesty appeared. I should have been terribly frightened if they had not been there. We sat talking for a bit in Princess Christian's private sitting-room, and then Princess Helena Victoria took me out into the corridor which runs round two sides of the quadrangle and showed me some of the lovely things with which it is filled. Many of the pictures I knew well from reproductions, and it was thrilling to me to see the originals. Presently a door opened and there was the Queen! The Princess presented me, and then we started on a tour round the Castle to select the views I should do for the Dolls' House.

THE Queen, as is well known, takes a great interest in old furniture, and knows all about the wonderful treasures that there are in the Royal Palaces, and she showed me some pieces that she had found scattered about in lumber-rooms or stored in forgotten boxes, now once more occupying places of honour. It was tremendously interesting to me, for antique furniture is my hobby, and I soon was not frightened any more, for the Queen is the most delightfully kind and natural person that one could possibly meet. We went into all the private sitting-rooms, the Queen's own sitting-room, and a lovely little Wedgwood room where Her Majesty's collection of that china is beautifully arranged. As far as I can remember, the colouring is pale grey and white, which sets off the colour of the blue to perfection. We then went round the State apartments, which are certainly the best rooms in the Castle—more beautiful than the various drawing-rooms facing on to the East Terrace, though they are fine, too—and eventually selected the Van Dyck Room and the Audience Chamber next to it for me to paint. But that was not by any means the end of the tour. We looked at a lot of armour that was being rearranged in a hall downstairs, and then went right round the Castle again through St. George's Hall and the famous Corridor to the Round Tower. And anyone trying to keep pace with Her Majesty climbing up the stairs to the Round Tower must realize that he should have been in strict training for it at least a month before. Poor Princess Helena Victoria and I arrived eventually, "faint but pursuing," but the Queen hadn't turned a hair.

Then the Queen showed me the rooms up there which contained some interesting things, and afterwards we went out on to the ramparts to look at the view. When we got down again it was about lunch time, and I took my leave of Her Majesty and the Princess and went off to lunch with the Household. So ended a memorable morning.

It was not for some months—almost a year, in fact—that the Queen was ready to sit for her portrait, though she talked of it at Windsor, and after the excitement of the arrival of Princess Mary's baby had somewhat abated I got Princess Christian to suggest that it was really time Her Majesty began the sittings, for I knew that the portrait was to be a birthday present for the King. There was the Duke of York's wedding looming in the future, and then the Court would be going to Windsor again, and after that the Italian visit and then

the activities of the season. So we started to work towards the end of February.

Buckingham Palace seems absurdly easy to get into, once the policemen in the quadrangle and the doorkeepers have been passed. You first go along a passage and wait in a very pretty Chinese Room, all black and gold lacquer with what I call "shamboo" furniture from the Pavilion at Brighton, and red Chinese satin embroidered with birds and flowers covering the walls. Then someone says, "The Queen will see you now," and you go up a flight of stairs, and there you are right in the private apartments. Of course, there are a good many footmen in red, and older ones in black, but once they get to know you they are quite tame.

I did not start painting the first day—it was a Sunday morning after church—but Her Majesty showed me the corner in which she generally sits by the window, and said it was her idea to be painted there. The King came in and I was presented to him by the Queen, and we discussed the position and so on, also the dress Her Majesty proposed to wear—a tea-gown of blue. She gave me the alternative of some very pretty brocade between mauve and pink which was not yet made up. I selected it because I thought that the blue dress rather killed the blue silk of the walls and furniture; besides, it would have made too much blue in the picture. The King then went away, and Her Majesty showed me other private sitting-rooms which are full of interesting and beautiful things. The one next to the room in which I painted the Queen is full of contemporary water-colours, principally garden scenes by the late Alfred Parsons and others. The King and Queen have tea there. There are several other rooms in the suite, including an Empire Room and a Chinese Room with a wonderful mantelpiece that one sees illustrated in the more important books on English furniture. I think it was brought there a few years ago from Eltham.

AFTER the first sitting, which was a few days later, I got rather frightened again. It was so disconcerting to be sitting down just opposite the Queen within two or three feet of her, and I thought I should never be able to paint her at all, certainly not to do her justice. I was quite right there. Altogether I got into rather a panic!

Lady Bertha Dawkins was the Lady-in-Waiting when I started painting, and she used to read the news of the day—long leading articles—and the Queen generally did some crochet. I did not care much for that crochet, for it meant seeing more of the top of the head and less of the face than I wanted, but, after all, one cannot order kings and queens about! One might get thrown into the Tower, or anything!

The sittings usually lasted about an hour and a quarter. Sometimes the King came in for a few minutes. We always had readings from the newspapers—wild horses would not drag the name of any particular paper from me—but I had generally read it before I got there, and was sometimes able to give a brief *résumé* of some of the articles and spare the Queen the boredom of listening to something rather dull. Besides, I did not want too serious an expression in the picture. We also talked a good deal some days, which I found much more interesting than reading the papers. A person sitting for a portrait should, I think, always talk, otherwise the expression is so apt to become set. Lady Bertha is delightful, and generally manages to give an amusing turn to the conversation.

Then I often went back in the afternoon to get on with painting the room. Sometimes I lunched with the Household and painted afterwards. The Queen usually goes out about three, and she very kindly told me to come and paint when I liked, but I did not often start before she had gone out. She often, I am afraid, found me there on her return. I found it difficult to tear myself away; it was a pleasure to see the Queen, and I knew if I stayed till tea-time I should get a kind word of encouragement from the King as he passed through the room on his way to tea, always with a pink and grey parrot on his finger. Why do sailors and parrots always go together?

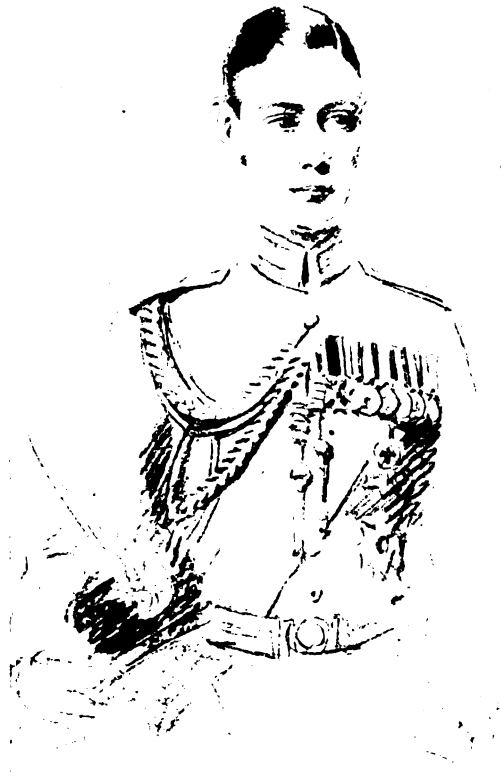
Charlotte or Ermyntrude—I cannot remember her name—is a very spoiled bird. The King lets her walk about on the Queen's writing table and make havoc with her papers (I do not know whether he allows her to do the same on his own writing table), and she always has tea with their Majesties, and she has a mirror in her cage so that she may admire her beautiful plumage. If the King goes away she sits in the Queen's room, and if that is not the *vie-de-luxe* I don't know what is.

I was tremendously flattered to find that the Queen remembered seeing several pictures of mine, some of them exhibited quite long ago. The Royal Family have always been very much interested in pictures, and always visit the Royal Institute of Painters in Water-Colour, of which I am a member, and inspect it pretty thoroughly too. The King is especially interested in how the paint is put on and how the various effects are produced.

I did two versions of the portrait of the Queen, a smaller one in water-colour and a larger one in oils, which was in the Royal

Academy and is reproduced on page 618. I was afraid it would not be finished in time, but His Majesty said he could arrange for me to have extra time if I wanted it and send the picture in at the last moment. I did not do this, however, for I thought it would be troublesome and irritating for the hangers. Most people like the smaller version of the picture best. It had to be made the size it is to hang in the King's room between the door and the fireplace under Frith's "Ramsgate Sands." As the Queen said to me: "You see, the King hasn't very much space." I thought of the whole British Empire, but I didn't say anything.

I had the privilege of meeting the Prince of Wales while I was painting at Buckingham Palace, and the Duke of York and Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon (as she then was), whose sister, Lady Elphinstone, I painted a few years ago. I also met Prince George, whose bright colouring and fine skin must be the envy and despair of many a *débutante*. They all dropped in casually and found me sitting there like one of the fixtures. I was so glad I was painting in a room that was so much used, for I got an impression of the happy and united life of the Royal Family which few people who are not their intimate friends or in their immediate entourage have the chance of getting. I was extremely sorry when the picture was finished.



The Duke of York.
By FRANK O. SALISBURY.
Now reproduced for the first time.

By FRANK O. SALISBURY.

At the time His Majesty the King first sat to me for the panel in the Royal Exchange to celebrate their Majesties' visit to the battle districts of France he was very busy, every moment for months being booked—he had not had a week he could call his own for five years. If the King could give me half an hour it was all I could expect. In order to make the most of my sitting, I prepared my canvas, painting in the background and an imaginary head, and getting to the Palace an hour beforehand, settling light and position ready for immediate action. While I waited, from the studio window I could see the King at an Investiture in the forecourt of the Palace, and I then made useful notes. I marvelled at the way the King spoke a personal word to the men as they came to receive their medals, and thought how exhausting it all must be.

At noon the Investiture was over, and ten minutes later the King was sitting for me. The moment of an artist's ambition had come. Papers of State and telegrams were continually being brought for the King's perusal while I painted. He was very tired, for he had been at work since seven that morning, and just once or twice for a moment closed his eyes. One o'clock, and the time was up. The King looked at my study and was pleased with the progress made, and said that, as he had not given me a chance that morning, he would sit for me again the next day while the paint was wet.

The casual observer of a Royal portrait or statue never realizes what a terrible nuisance an artist must be and how considerate Royalty is. When I was to paint the Princess Mary Wedding Picture, the

King said to me: "Now, Mr. Salisbury, you know my head so well you will not require a sitting!" Unfortunately, the position this time was the other side of the face, and my studies were of very little help—expressions and portraits are very subtle things.

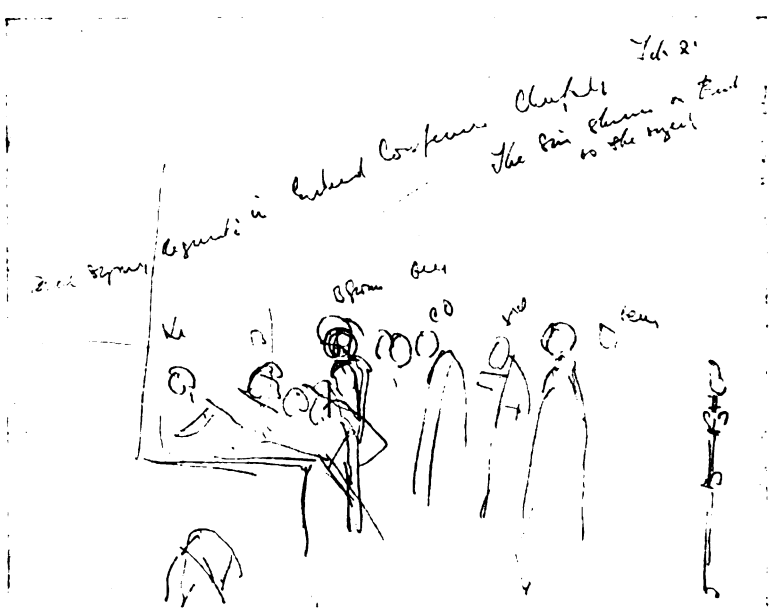
For the "Signing of the Register," Sir George Frampton kindly lent me the model of his busts of the King and Queen. No one enjoys a joke more than Sir George. Early one morning I took the busts back in the car, rang the bell, and told Sir George that the King and Queen had arrived!

One morning the Queen had promised to sit for me at Buckingham Palace, and, as ill-fortune would have it, going down I was held up by the traffic, and when I reached the Marble Arch I realized I was late. Getting into the Park, the road was clear and the temptation too great, and in a few seconds I was travelling at thirty-five miles an hour. Suddenly out stepped a policeman, and I was delayed again. Although the officer thought my important engagement might help me, I was duly fined for exceeding the speed limit.

It was quite by accident and not previously arranged that I saw the signing of the register at Princess Mary's wedding. From the platform which was erected for me to see the wedding I walked along as the procession followed through and looked into Edward the Confessor's Chapel. Just at the moment when Princess Mary was signing her name, the sun came out and threw a wonderful shaft of light upon the Royal group, reflecting back into the shadows and making a very wonderful effect, which I noted down in the rough manner here reproduced and which, though vague, I found very useful.

Princess Mary gave me the first sitting for the wedding picture in her wedding gown at Chesterfield House. I had arranged my lighting, and when Her Royal Highness came into the fine ballroom she looked even more beautiful than on her wedding day. The Princess has a wonderful expression, a charm and beauty of complexion that almost defies paint to express. The sittings are all too short to do her justice. It was very interesting to note her popularity with the general public. The gates of the courtyard were thrown open for a few minutes for me to pass out, and during that time a crowd seemed to spring up from nowhere to see if they could catch only a fleeting glimpse of the Princess.

At the time (July, 1919) when the pageant to commemorate the National Peace Thanksgiving on the steps of St. Paul's Cathedral (now in the Royal Exchange) was complete except for the portrait of Queen Alexandra. Her Majesty was far from well and was not giving sittings to any artists, and I almost



This rough sketch by Mr. Salisbury (which should be compared with the finished picture on the opposite page) shows the wonderful shaft of light thrown by the sun upon the Royal group while Princess Mary was signing the Register.

Princess Mary's Wedding: the signing of the Register.

By FRANK O. SALISBURY.

Now reproduced for the first time.

The King at Sandringham.
By CECIL CUTLER.

despaired, therefore, of getting a good portrait. One morning, however, a telephone message came from Marlborough House to say that Queen Alexandra would give me a sitting at three o'clock that afternoon on condition that I did not keep her more than half an hour.

At a quarter to three I was at Marlborough House, and by three o'clock I had selected and arranged everything ready for work in the Queen's small studio. On the walls of this studio there were a number of water-colours painted by Queen Alexandra which were remarkably beautiful and full of vigour and artistic fascination. Some of these, I remember, were of Scotland and others of Italy.

Punctually at three o'clock Queen Alexandra entered, and as I studied the beauty of her head, her perfection of form, fresh and with that expression of exquisite charm which had held a great people enthralled, I felt absolutely helpless. What *could* I do in so short a time? To add to my difficulties, I had no sooner started to work on the picture than the sun shone out brightly into the little room, upsetting all the lighting arrangements I had so carefully made, and I had to work with the blind drawn. During the sitting Queen Alexandra, referring to the paintings on the walls, told me that she had not been able to touch a brush since the death of King Edward.

In spite of the strict condition, Her Majesty was gracious enough to give me another ten minutes, and after the sitting was over took me to see her favourite portrait of the late King.

By SIR WILLIAM LLEWELLYN, K.C.V.O., R.A.

To Sir William Llewellyn fell the honour of painting the Coronation portrait of the Queen. Her Majesty was a most considerate "sitter," standing for two hours at a time while the portrait of her in her robes was painted. Sir William's method was first to make a full-sized head, then a moderate-sized full-length portrait of about thirty inches. Then sketches of the details of the robes were made, and finally the whole picture was put together in the studio. The Queen suggested that Sir William Llewellyn should attend the various Drawing Rooms and Court functions to see her under varying circumstances, and this he did. He also had access to the State jewels.

Her Majesty's dress in the State por-

Queen Alexandra.
By FRANK O. SALISBURY.
This portrait was painted in a little over half an hour.
Now reproduced for the first time.

incess Mary.
FRANK O. SALISBURY.
w reproduced for the first time.

trait is emblematical. The gown has gold embroidery work on a white satin ground, symbolic of the Empire. The waves, for instance, represent sea supremacy; the lotus flowers and the Star of India the Indian Empire; and one may also see the rose, the thistle, and the shamrock.

The State portrait of the Queen was copied in colour and sent by Her Majesty during the war with a letter of sympathy to the widow of every Indian soldier killed on active service. The following, in Her Majesty's handwriting, was the message at the bottom of the picture :—

> *"In sorrow and sympathy my thoughts fly across the seas to my Sisters in India, that beautiful Land which I have twice visited and love so well. I send you this to do honour to a very brave Soldier of the Empire who died for you and for us in the glorious fight for truth and freedom against tyranny and broken faith.*
>
> *"MARY, R.I."*

Few people know there is a Painting Room at Buckingham Palace. It is the centre room over the archway overlooking the Mall and the Queen Victoria Memorial. It is not a room in which it is easy to paint. There is no direct light at all, especially with the projecting columns of the new front. Portraits are painted in this room, but in the case of the State portraits the State Dining Room was turned into a studio, most of the windows being blocked up. This room is very near the private apartments, so that Her Majesty was able to come out fully robed without walking the whole length of the Palace.

The portrait of the Queen here reproduced by the kindness of the United Service Club is, except for some slight changes in the background, identical with the State portrait which is now in Buckingham Palace.

Queen Mary.
By SIR W. LLEWELLYN.

King George.
By A. T. NOWELL.

His Majesty's kindliness, geniality, courtesy, and love of fun, coupled with dignity and a sense of power, make up a winning, lovable, and unforgettable personality. To reproduce on canvas such a character as I have suggested is no easy task, but certainly the King did all in his power to make it easy by binding himself to the purpose with alacrity and cheeriness, talking of all things freely and setting one quite at ease; in fact, doing everything possible to forward the work. Thus, for example, after the first sitting, His Majesty said: "Come and see the pictures in the Palace," and took me round all the corridors, and finally the private rooms, so that I might see everything that might be useful for my purpose. All the sittings were uninterrupted, the King and I being alone for an hour or more, and always there was the same punctuality, cheerfulness, and courtesy. No sign of boredom ever showed itself, and one wished that all one's sitters would behave like the King.

By A. T. NOWELL.

At the request of Sir George Hayter Chubb, head of the Governors of the Leys School, Cambridge, about a year before the war the King opened the new library of the Leys. At the conclusion of the ceremony, as His Majesty was leaving, he turned to Sir George and said: "Is there anything else I can do for you?" Sir George replied: "Yes, sir, there *is* one thing. Will you be so good as to sit for your portrait to Mr. A. T. Nowell, so that the first portrait placed in the library may be that of Your Majesty?" "Certainly," said the King, and so the commission was given.

Then the war broke out and word was sent that the King could not find time at present to sit for the portrait, and we must wait for happier times. More than once during the war word was sent to Sir George that the King had not forgotten his promise, and at last, on the conclusion of the armistice, sittings were given at Buckingham Palace.

The Queen in her private sitting-room at Buckingham Palace
By W. B. E. RANKEN

A FAMOUS PAINTER OF PRETTY GIRLS

The Art of SUZANNE MEUNIER

THE drawings of Suzanne Meunier have so delighted the public by their light and graceful expression of the gestures, attitudes, and something of the soul of the woman of to-day, in all her frivolous and fascinating moods, that we are sure our readers would like to know something of this charming painter who is also a charming woman. Suzanne Meunier is not a modernist, but she interprets her subjects so faithfully that to look through the collection of her designs is to find, as it were, a contemporary history of the Parisian girl. Yet her sketches reveal such taste and refinement that her drawings have a purity and softness of line that make of them so many delightful poems.

She has not confined herself to one particular medium of expression, but varies her treatment in a hundred ways. Her pastels and her water-colours are equally charming, while her crayon sketches tinted with colour are among the most successful of her works.

As a keen admirer of her art, says a representative of THE STRAND MAGAZINE, I was curious to know the author of so many delightful things.

PINK PYJAMAS.

She immediately put me at my ease and proceeded to answer my questions with great good nature and simplicity.

"My vocation," she told me, "has shown itself from my infancy. While I was still quite tiny I used to cover with quaint designs all the doors and the backs of the cupboards."

"Your parents must have been delighted with your precocious leanings towards Art?"

"Yes," she replied, smilingly, "but they didn't—let me see it. Often I was deprived of my dessert—or received a sharp rebuke—even a mild box on the ear—as a reward for these childish efforts.

"At school my rough notebooks were adorned with sketches from cover to cover, and as teachers are not as a rule noted for their sympathy with the picturesque I

THE FAN.

Suzanne Meunier is living at present in Alsace, and I took advantage of a visit to Strasbourg to call on her and ask for an interview. I was charmed at my reception. Suzanne Meunier is quite young; her face is so "spirituelle," so alight with intelligence, that one almost forgets how pretty she is—so greatly is one charmed to find the same feminine note of elegance as that portrayed in her art.

As one looks round her studio, with its walls hung with delicate pastels and soft-hued hangings—the old Louis XV. Breton bed transformed into a divan—the open piano within reach—the cushions heaped up everywhere in an harmonious riot of colour—one realizes what a perfect setting it is for its owner—and how much her dual personality of artist and woman has contributed to her success.

THE EASTER EGG

was looked upon as a deplorable pupil. But while my notebooks were being covered with little figures it must be owned that my career was taking shape, and as soon as I left school I entered the Academy Jullian, where I began my first serious studies."

"You were a good pupil there, I am sure," I remarked.

"Yes," she smiled, "that was quite a different story. I at once showed a marked aptitude for studies of figure work—nothing fascinated me more than to get the real expression of the eyes, the mysterious subtlety of features, the sheen and the wave of the hair. When I was twenty I became a member of the Society of Woman Painters — I exhibited at their Salon in 1909. Then I gave in my resignation, as I wished to travel."

"To Italy?"

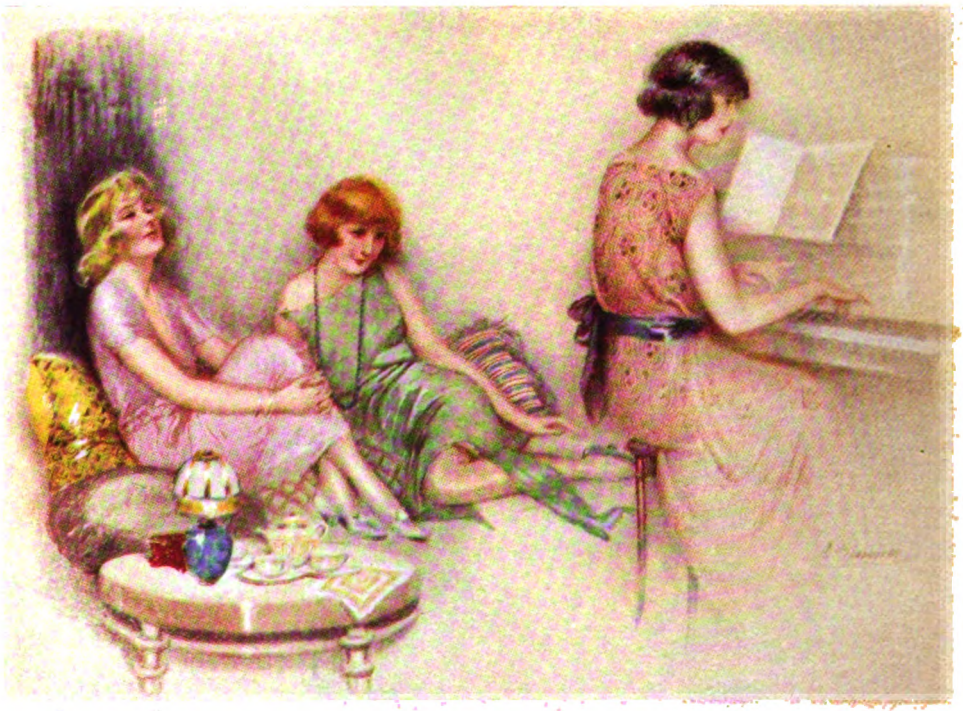
"No, to Spain. There is nothing like travel to give experience and to develop the character when one is young—especially in the case of a young artist. I entered the Ecole des Beaux Arts at Barcelona. I gained a prize there and exhibited at the International Exhibition of 1911."

I remarked that she did not lose any time. "There is never any time to lose," she said, quickly. "After two years' stay in Spain I returned to Paris, and in 1916 the Galerie Joubert published my colour drawings, the series of which is known to you. The subject of all of them is the Parisian girl—impertinent and mischievous, but whose most audacious moods and gestures are tinged with a grace all her own.

"At the same time I did not give up my portrait work. I did numerous pastels, seeking all the time to obtain luminous effects, and in 1920 I exhibited at

NEW SHOES.

A Famous Painter of Pretty Girls



THE TRIO.

Bordeaux a series of drawings of women's heads, which achieved great success, since not one of my pictures came back to me — each one found a buyer.

"The critics of the art world were very kind to me. Here is a cutting which I have kept, since it marked my first great success:—

"'A series of pastels signed Suzanne Meunier is remarkable for the clever ingenuity of the setting —and the captivating spontaneity of their arrangement. The refined charm of these artistic designs is not wholly intellectual—there is also a delicacy of expression in the varied treatment of her subject and a lightness of touch in her wonderful technique—so bewitching yet so restrained. But how modern and true to life they are! Success has come to her quickly and is acknowledged by connoisseurs and artists alike. Suzanne Meunier! Here is a name of a portraitist to be remembered alike in galleries and drawing-rooms.'

"One has to get known everywhere," continued my hostess, as I handed back the cutting. "I have also my public at Nancy, where I exhibit regularly each year at the Exhibition of the 'Amis des Arts.'"

I murmured that she was not unknown in England, and she owned smilingly that she had been much amused at letters from unknown English admirers

LOVE IN A SWING.

of her work requesting a signed photograph. She confided to me, too, that she hopes one day to hold an exhibition in London, and I assured her that such a step would delight her English admirers.

I suggested that she must work hard, as I had seen numerous examples of her work.

"Yes," she said, "I work all the time—I like nothing better, as I am devoted to my art. I know no greater joy than to create beautiful silhouettes, to draw pretty faces with laughing or tender eyes—to see the picture I have framed in my mind grow under my pencil. I have a deep love of beauty, and therefore I choose lovely models—the harsh and the grotesque do not appeal to me. I prefer pleasing types.

"Of course, I am always taking notes. I carry with me a little notebook in which I draw an enormous number of sketches from life. These are quickly done. In three pencil strokes I jot down for reference the supple curve of a hip or a shoulder, a youthful neck, or a vivacious profile under a hat. I sketch at the theatre, at the restaurant—everywhere, in fact."

SUZANNE MEUNIER.

"But you surely take some recreation?"

"I play tennis, I motor, I am keen on mountaineering and flying, and, of course, on those occasions my notebook remains in my bag."

I suggested that an artist like herself must have numerous social obligations.

She shook her head emphatically and assured me that she goes out very little and studiously avoids visits and receptions—in that way she has time to read a great deal and to enjoy her music. When she volunteered that Chopin was her favourite composer—Chopin, the great interpreter of women's moods and passions—I was struck once more by the harmony of her tastes with their expression in her art.

She told me that, like English women, she was very interested in her home—adding that her husband, whom she married in 1920, was of English extraction. And, in fact, the arrangement of fine old furniture in her house bore evidence to the artistic taste of the owner—even her little black-and-white cat, Mitsou, which, she told me, sleeps for hours on her knees while she works, added a home-like touch to her surroundings. She insisted that, contrary to the accepted idea, the life of a married woman is not incompatible with that of an artist, and that her output of work has remained the same since her marriage.

"What are your plans?" I asked her.

"To go on with my art—and, in fact, the path is already marked out. For quite a long time now I have been associated with the Librairie de l'Estampe, which reproduces my pastels and water-colours to perfection, and I contribute regularly to the artistic publication, *Eros*. This summer also I signed a contract with the *Sourire*, one of the wittiest and most amusing of Parisian magazines."

I felt as I said good-bye to Suzanne Meunier that here at last I had met someone in whom the artist and the woman were perfectly balanced. Her designs speak for themselves—they have a special and personal charm typical of their author, a modern woman, acute of perception and with the soul of an artist, piquant as the subjects of her pictures, the gay, spirited, and lovely girls of the Paris of to-day.

Mr. E. Phillips Oppenheim's thrilling series—

"THE TERRIBLE HOBBY OF SIR JOSEPH LONDE, BART."

will be resumed next month.

"All right! Come along, then!" said the sailor. "Let's win the coral earrings for the lady."

White Slippers

by

CHARLTON LAWRENCE EDHOLM

ILLUSTRATED BY UGO MATANIA

NOT being able to afford new boots, I was having my old ones fitted with sturdy half soles and new heels. That is how I happened to spend an hour in the stuffy workshop of the cobbler, a bent and twisted cobbler like a tough old juniper.

While he tap-tap-tapped on my half soles, active as a woodpecker and as absorbed in his work, a friend of the old man wandered in and seated himself on the bench beside me with a long sigh of relief. The new-comer was a peddler with a heavy tray of collar buttons, packets of needles, and papers of

pins—a tray that hung from his shoulders by a broad strap and was swept by his patriarchal beard.

Over his arm was a stock-in-trade of shoe-strings, a mass that was thick enough to form a cable for a liner. He must be an optimistic old peddler, I thought, to burden himself with hundreds of shoe-laces. I asked him, "How's business?"

"Just middling," replied the watery-eyed old man. "I sold a collar button to a sailor, a paper of pins and two darning needles to a fat lady, and three pairs of leather shoe-strings to a rich Spaniard."

"Ah! And who was your wealthy patron?"

"Pedro Ruiz it was yesterday. Don Pedro, if you please, to-day! He had just won four hundred dollars in the lottery, so he was a hidalgo. Yet he deserved little of fortune, for he patiently waited until I had made up the change from a silver dollar, and he counted the coppers one by one, as if he were still loading sacks of sugar for his daily crust. Bah! There is no soul in these people nowadays. They are lacking in fire, in generosity, in nobility!

"It was very different in the old days. Eh, Gaspar? It was very different when we were young fellows." He raised his quavering voice to address that ancient friend, the cobbler, but Gaspar only grunted assent, as a twisted juniper might creak in the wind, and did not look up.

"He knows, he knows!" continued the patriarch, his blue eyes gleaming moistly. "He will not say much about it, but he remembers as well as I do the good old days when the streets of this port were paved with silver dollars. How they flung their money about, those sailors from everywhere! Gold from every mint in the world was in their pockets—but it did not stay there too long.

"The red-haired sailors from Ireland were the wildest spenders, but the Yankees had more money. The Swedes spent their wages when they were drunk, and the Englishmen spent theirs, drunk or sober. I remember well that gay English boy who gave a five-pound note to the monkey. Do you remember, Gaspar, the Italian with his hurdy-gurdy and his monkey, and how the little beast tore the bank-note with his teeth in a rage? He was expecting a copper, you see, and when the sailor gave him a piece of paper instead, the monkey was snarling with fury. Do you remember, Gaspar?"

"Si," grunted the cobbler.

"Oh, Si! Si! Si! You have nothing more to say than just Si, when I remind you of those happy days when sailors wore gold rings in their ears and carried golden doubloons in their pockets. Yet you have lived in those rich days, Gaspar. You have patched tattered shoes with white silk and set diamond buckles upon them, yet all you can answer is to croak Si!"

The peddler turned to me. "He is a dry stick, that Gaspar, yet he patched old shoes and set them with diamond buckles in his youth."

"Tell me about it," I replied.

I offered the old peddler a cigarette. He accepted it with grave politeness. While we smoked, he talked, and this is what he told me:—

IT was in the cantina of Ramon Guitterez that I saw for the first time that mad Englishman. He was drinking with a seaman from Nova Scotia, a long, lean fellow who never smiled, but put down the little glasses of brandy as if he were dropping letters into a box. And the spirits seemed to have no effect on him. He might as well have been a letter-box. The English boy showed his liquor, though. A fine lad he was, brown-skinned, with dark curling hair and hazel eyes. From too much brandy, his eyes were swimming and he laughed at his own jokes (which was more than his companion did), showing his splendid white teeth and the strong muscles of his throat as he threw his head back.

Hangers-on drew close to the pair of drinkers and the Englishman invited them all to drink, throwing a golden sovereign on the bar. A narrow-faced little Frenchman, a very skilful card-player named Durand, edged closer at the sight of gold, and I saw his cold grey eyes fixed on the stranger's ruddy face. A tall Venezuelan, whom I knew as a pickpocket and cut-throat, was also in the friendly group of drinkers. A woman joined them, a full-bosomed creature like ripe tropical fruit, with eyes the colour of topaz and hair like brass. She laid her hand on the Englishman's arm, saying something in Italian, but he shook her off roughly, as she pointed to the door of a room at the back of the bar. Her eyes flamed as he brushed her hand away, and the gambler explained, "You do not understand what the lady say?"

"Don't I, just!" retorted the English sailor, with a loud laugh.

"She say there is a wheel of fortune in the other room. You know? Like a lottery. There are rich prizes you can win for a dollar: bracelets, earrings, combs of tortoiseshell set with gold."

"Well, what of it?"

"She, the lady here, Signorina Teresa, wish you to play a number for her. For the luck. She wish you to win her the earrings of coral"

"Why does she want *my* luck?"

"It is easy to see that monsieur is a favourite of fortune," replied the gambler, bowing. "The lady wish to borrow a little of your luck."

"All right! Come along, then!" exclaimed the sailor, emptying his glass. "Let's win the coral earrings for the lady." He gave the woman his arm with much politeness and everybody moved into the back room, where a crowd was pressing about a great wheel devoted to chance. The wheel was standing on a greasy table with candles burning all around it. The room with its low ceiling was hot, stifling, and a-buzz with many voices. Candle-light threw a reddish glow and grotesque black shadows on the faces of sailors and the sweepings of the port. A little black boy with a red handkerchief tied over his eyes was whirling the big red arrow of the wheel.

Every time it stopped there was a great craning of dirty necks to see who was the winner and what he had won. As we entered a loud laugh went up that made the candle flames leap. A Portuguese fishmonger, a porpoise of a man with mere blobs of fat for cheeks, had won a powder-box of ivory, with a huge puff like a giant thistle-down. The fishmonger laughed too. He was a winner at any rate. If he had won something he did not want, so much the worse! But he was a winner!

The English sailor laughed more uproariously than the rest, and flung down a silver dollar for a chance at the next whirl, and handed his number, 33, to the siren who clung upon his arm. The other gamblers selected their numbers, and at a hoarse order from Ramon Guitterez the Negro boy spun the wheel. Like a reddish blur it flashed about the circle, slowed gradually and hesitated, then stopped at the winning number.

"Bravo!" shrieked the brazen-haired woman, as she saw that the arrow pointed to 33, and she waved her number triumphantly. "You have brought me luck, caro mio!" she exclaimed. "Grazia."

But she laughed in shrill derision when the prize was fished out of the depths of the black chest on which Ramon sat. It was not the bracelet of gold, it was not the coveted earrings of coral; it was a pair of white kid slippers of finest workmanship and quality, but much the worse for wear. Amid the real treasures there were comparatively worthless objects, and these slippers were perhaps the most worthless of the lot.

The woman refused to accept the prize. She gave the slippers a contemptuous glance, and with a wave of her jewelled hand rejected them. "Try once more, signor!" she coaxed.

"All right. Better luck next time!" The English sailor threw down his dollar.

"What will we do with the Cinderellas?" he asked, carelessly. His glance rested on the greedy face of the Portuguese fishmonger, and he made as if to toss them to him across the table.

"If monsieur does not wish to keep the slippers, they might be put back among the prizes," suggested the silky voice of Durand the gambler. "It is all for charity, this little game. It is for the benefit of a Spanish lady, Doña Pilar Ybarra. A very charming lady! But she is, what you call it, down upon her luck. Her effects are being turned into cash to satisfy her creditors."

"Right-o!" agreed the English sailor. "Here, Ramon, give these slippers another number and put them up again."

IT was done, and by an odd mischance the sailor was once more the winner of the white kid slippers.

"What's the game?" he demanded, half amused and half suspicious, while his frail companion shrieked with laughter. "Are you trying to play some crooked game with me?"

"But no, monsieur, assuredly not. It was just a chance. The numbers were different this time," said Durand.

"Try once more, amico!" urged his companion.

"All right. It will help the young Spanish lady along. I don't care. Here, Ramon, chuck them into the chest," assented the sailor.

Once more he flung a silver dollar on the table. Once more the chances were all sold, and the black boy, stolid under his red mask, spun the arrow. There was a minute of suspense, then a babel of surprise and amusement. That devil of an Englishman had again won. They were the lucky fellows, those Englishmen! And there were more grins and guffaws when the master of the cantina checked the numbers once more and gravely handed the stranger his prize with a profound bow.

Again, for the third time, he had won the white kid slippers.

Now, however, he was really angry, convinced that the whole proceeding was a put-up job. He wanted to fight somebody. His fists looked menacing. But the siren clung to his arm, laughing. "It's no use, little game-cock! The blessed Saint Anthony wants you to have these slippers. He has his reasons, no doubt. So stuff them into your pocket. You are lucky—but not for me!"

Her topaz eyes turned to the fishmonger. "Say, papa, will *you* win the coral earrings

For the third time he had won the white kid slippers. Now, however, he was really angry, convinced that the whole proceeding was a put-up job.

for me ? " She smiled with her full red lips upon the delighted Portuguese. His eyes were lost in the fat of his cheeks as he smiled assent, for the minx was pretty beyond the ordinary. She ran to hang upon his thick arm, laughing over her shoulder at the Englishman.

" Take your winnings to Doña Pilar," she railed at him. " In return for her slippers, she will give you—who knows what ? "

With that she dismissed the youth from her mind, busy selecting a number for which the Portuguese paid.

The sailor looked about for his companion, but the Nova Scotian was gone. The seaman had slipped off to some more congenial amusement. Thereupon the Englishman began elbowing his way to the door, drawing black looks from many whom he jostled, but otherwise unchallenged. As he emerged into the narrow, moonlit street, barred with inky shadows, he perceived that two chance acquaintances were with him: Durand the

Frenchman, who understood cards so well, and the tall Venezuelan, who leered at him under eyebrows that met like a black band across his brow.

"How now, caballero?" said he. "Shall we have a nice little drink together in a quiet place I know?"

"The gentleman is coming with me," asserted the Frenchman in his smooth voice. "He is weary of all the noise and the smell of rabble. I know a club. Very distinguished. . . ."

"No!" said the Englishman, decidedly. "I am going to put these slippers into the hands of Doña Pilar herself."

"Bueno! I will show you the way to her house," agreed the Venezuelan.

"I am going in that direction. We will stroll together," added Durand.

So arm in arm, between the two worst rogues on the water-front, the young man walked through the dirty, ill-smelling streets. They passed groups squatting in shadowy doorways, where the glow of cigarettes and the blurred mass of cotton shirts showed in the darkness. They heard the tinkle of mandolins. They passed barred windows where courtship was in progress; the suitor without, pressed against the wall, the adored one within the grating, a red flower in her hair. They passed lighted doorways, whence streamed forth shouts and tuneless songs and the yellow glare of lamp-light. They turned many corners, followed many alleys, and came finally to a courtyard where the back door of a house stood ajar. The gaunt structure was built upon piers; the courtyard was paved with rough splintered boards. Below them the splash of the tide could be heard upon piles, and the smell of harbour mud rose to them through the cracks.

THE house they approached was an old mansion gone to decay, a two-and-a-half storey structure rising above the flat roofs of the squat sheds, warehouses, and drinking dens that composed the remainder of the quadrangle. If they had stood at the front of the house the Englishman might have recognized it as the cantina he had left twenty minutes before. The winding trail through the slums had been a mere ruse on the part of his companions, each hoping by a lucky chance to shake off the other.

"We are here," announced Durand. "At the head of the stairs you will find the apartment of Doña Pilar. I will wait for you here."

The sailor groped and stumbled up the dark narrow stairway, and the Venezuelan made as if to follow him noiselessly on tip-toe. But Durand restrained him.

"Stay, pig! Back! You will ruin everything."

"Why not? It is safe enough. The passage is dark. My little sweetheart is thirsty." He showed a quick flash of steel that was instantly sheathed again. He grinned upon his colleague with fatuous complacency.

"Fool! You would bring the whole cantina about us," Durand growled.

"Well, what then? They are all good friends."

"Good friends, yes. And each friend would have to be paid for his silence. Otherwise you would wear a tight cravat, my friend, before the month is out. How much of the Englishman's gold would be left for us? If your dear friends should hear him shout 'Murder! Help!' they would share it between them."

"Bah! They would never hear. I work fast." He jerked away and sidled toward the dark staircase.

"Wait!" pleaded the gambler. "There is a better way. Be patient. You shall have half, though by rights he is *my* bird."

"*Your* bird! But enough. What is your way?"

"Just a little harmless game. It will not hurt him. That is important, for you well know England has a long arm. Listen! First I will let him win. I will flatter his skill at cards. He will win more. We will double the stakes. At the right moment, luck will change. The cards will come my way. I will have all. Everything. Half of it is yours if you are still."

"I know a better game than that. I tickle his windpipe with my teaser. So! How can he shout with his windpipe split? It can't be done. I've seen it tried. Then I take *all*. I like that game better." The Venezuelan grinned.

The Frenchman almost wept at such stubborn lack of judgment. "Oh, blind! It is your abominable avarice that blinds you, and will cost you dear. Hear me out." He reached up to whisper in the ear of his tall companion. "What the Englishman has now is but a bagatelle compared to what he will bring here in a month."

"What do you mean? How do you know all that?"

"I have heard him bragging, the drunkard. Boasting to his long friend, the sour man that resembles a pickled eel. Our bird is no common sailor. To-day he carries five or six gold pieces in his pockets. Next month he will have a fortune. Gold in great bags. Handfuls to throw about. It is not a trading vessel, that schooner on which he sails to-morrow. It is on an expedition to recover treasure from a sunken wreck. I know not where, but he knows. What trading his captain does is a blind. It is the wreck of the *Golconda* they sail for. They know where

to dive, and believe me, my friend, if we spare our little pigeon, he will carry back much gold to us. Let me win a few sovereigns from the boy. When he returns, rich, he will be ready to play again, for revenge. And I will give him his revenge. Yes."

"And half of that is mine, too, if I let him go this time?" demanded the ruffian with the knife.

"Yes, certainly. Half is yours, my ancient. If only you deal tactfully with him now."

The pair whispered together a long time in the shadow, waiting for the stumbling tread of the English sailor on the dark steps. But already the boy had forgotten them utterly; he had found Doña Pilar and Alice.

It was at the moment that Durand laid a restraining hand upon the cut-throat that the lad tapped at a door in the blackness of the passage. Only a streak of yellow light below the panels showed that a door was in that stuffy cavern. A voice croaked something that he could not understand, but he boldly pushed his way in, expecting to find some brazen wench like the one who had coaxed him to gamble for earrings.

What he saw was a grim old lady, very fat but very stiff and erect in a high-backed chair upholstered in wine-coloured velvet. She sat by a shabby gilt table, on which burned two candles in a candelabrum that was designed for seven tapers. Like her room, Doña Pilar proclaimed the wreck of grandeur. The old woman with her domineering face, a beak of a nose flanked by two stern wrinkles, a strong mouth that was not softened by the grey moustaches, the black eyes that stared under shaggy black eyebrows, must have been a personage in her day. As for the decrepit furniture and tattered hangings, they once might have adorned a palace.

"What do you want?" demanded Doña Pilar, crisply. "This is no place for drunken sailors."

In spite of her hostility, the young man was not abashed. As for his intoxication, that had worn off in the long walk through the streets. He was almost sober. Almost—a bit exalted, that was all.

"Doña Pilar," he said, with a deferential bow, "forgive the lateness of my visit. I came to restore your property to your gracious hands. I had the good fortune to win your slippers in Ramon's cantina, and the still better fortune to find it possible to return them to you to-night. Will you accept them?"

The old lady gave a hoarse chuckle as she glanced at the white kid slippers. "You are too kind!" she exclaimed. "And too flattering. Look!" She extended a foot from below the ragged skirt of brocaded silk, and showed a foot, broad, shapeless, and flat, nested in a generous slipper of felt. "Once I might have worn such dainty things." She sighed regretfully. "But then you were in your cradle, my child."

"But—but——" The boy stammered and blushed. "They *said* the slippers were yours."

"They were a gift from one of my girls. Many people were kind when they heard that I was forced to sell my rings, my bracelets, even my toilet articles. Some gave this, some that, but Alice, poor girl, had no jewellery. Not even an extra gown. She sent me a pair of slippers with a kiss. She has a heart of gold, has Alice."

"Then will you give them to her?" asked the sailor, still proffering the white slippers.

"Give them to her yourself, my lad," smiled the old lady, genially. "Her room is in the attic, just above mine."

BUT to his tap on the door above there was no response, nor was there any glimmer of light. "Perhaps she has gone out," thought the youth. "Oh, well, I'll just leave them on her table. It will be a surprise when she comes in."

He pushed open the door, which was unlatched, and saw instantly that the girl was there. She was reclining in a window seat, leaning out over the ledge, with the moonlight streaming upon the mass of her pale hair, that hung over her slender shoulders. She looked round indifferently at the sound of the door gently striking the wall, and said, carelessly, "Come in," to the shadowy figure on the threshold.

But the sailor remained where he was. Something familiar stirred in him as he saw the fragile form outlined under a dressing-gown of cool blue silk. Her arm, bare above the elbow, was white and frail in that light, like a carving in ivory. Her profile, as she turned casually from gazing over the harbour, awakened recollections, too. Where had he seen such a brow as that, low and but slightly arched over a little straight nose? The curve of the lips; not too full but a little scornful? The chin, small and delicate, but wilful in its contour and its poise? Of what was he reminded by the cosy mansard room, so unusual in this part of the world? Not littered with prints, lithographs, and the usual odds and ends of primitive decorative attempts. The chairs were straight and severe. The small bed in the shadow seemed virginal, so simple was the four-square outline against the pale grey wall.

"Well, come in. What are you waiting

for ? " The girl rose easily, without haste, and lighted a candle. Then she faced him as he stood in the doorway. " Why, you're English ! " she exclaimed. " How jolly ! "

The sailor took a short step towards her, then stopped. He extended the hand that held the tiny pair of slippers, and he saw her blue eyes narrow to a smile of pleasure.

" My slippers ! What a nice boy you are to bring me my slippers ! You shall have a kiss for them. One for each ! And you may put them on for me too."

The girl dropped back upon the cushioned window seat and extended a narrow foot, kicking off the mule of blue satin that balanced from her toes. " That's one good deed I was sorry for ! " she exclaimed. " After I gave the old lady my slippers, I remembered that I had nothing left but these." She kicked off the other mule. " It never entered my head that a nice boy would trouble to bring them back to me."

The sailor advanced awkwardly another step or two, then halted.

" Well ! " she challenged. " What now ? Aren't you going to see if they fit me ? "

She looked at him intently, the candle between them lighting his tanned face, his troubled hazel eyes, his lips compressed with boyish determination, his expression, almost stern, but more unhappy than stern. Finally she jumped up, laughing, and ran to him, laying a white hand on each shoulder. " Oh," she said, gaily, " you're shy ! " She gazed at him with candid, almost child-like eyes, blue as cornflowers. " I like you that way. I like you better for being shy." And bending over, she herself inserted her slender silk-clad feet into the white slippers.

When she raised her eyes he had retreated a step nearer the door. Still looking at the girl wistfully, he was about to leave her with a hasty good-bye, but suddenly her manner changed. She was no longer the easy-mannered, audacious woman of the seaport ; she was a lonesome child, far from her own people. " Don't go away," she pleaded. " I'm blue. I want to talk to someone."

Gingerly he seated himself on the straight chair in the middle of the room, holding his cap in both hands with a nervous gesture.

" Oh, don't be afraid ! " she said, with a touch of bitterness. " I'm not going to be sentimental. I would just like a little human companionship for a while. Can't you pretend that I'm another fellow ? Or pretend that I'm a *nice* girl. A friend of your sister. Have you a sister ? "

He nodded assent.

" Well, can't you pretend that I'm one of her friends ? I might have been once. You never can tell."

" Of course I can imagine that," he answered. " When I saw you the first moment, it seemed to me that I was home. This little room, so restful ; you, with your loose hair, your English profile, your voice —it was like a bit of my own country."

" Then why were you going away in such a hurry ? "

" I—I don't know." The boy hesitated to answer, though he knew well enough.

But his shyness was conquered. She talked about commonplace things ; the seaport, the houses and shops, the people of the country, always with allusions to stir memories, comparisons of these things with similar things in England. Before long he was telling her all about himself. She could never have learned anything of all this by questions, yet what he told her was not very unusual ; a common enough story of a younger son, a ne'er-do-well, who had tried his fortune on the sea and had found little as yet. But she was hungry to hear the sound of her own language and to listen to words that had no ulterior purpose ; just a friendly chat with a fellow from home. It was good.

THEN, without intending it, she dropped an occasional word that gave a hint of her own unhappy story, never guessing that those words were like sparks dropped upon tow. " Before Harry left me," she said once ; and another time, " A year after I was married." While he was careful not to question her, the sailor was aware soon enough of the tragedy of a rector's daughter who had impetuously left home to marry the man she loved, an adventurer, a rolling stone. His neglect and desertion, her pride that had kept her plight from her parents in the country parsonage, so that in her letters she represented herself as care-free and happy—he caught a glimpse of all this in their talk about other things. And because he had some of her qualities he could understand how her cold indifference to everything, after that crash of her illusions, had hurried her to the devil.

" Where is your husband now ? " he asked, suddenly, after a pause.

She started. " Why do you want to know ? "

The lad replied without emphasis : " Because I am going to kill him."

" Oh, no, you're not ! " But she gave his hand a quick pressure of gratitude, and perhaps something more.

She smiled at him sadly. " One life twisted out of shape ! That is plenty for him. If I *knew*, I should not tell you where he is."

" I shall find him without your help," the boy affirmed, with a cold rage that was more menacing than fury. " A creature like that leaves a trail of slime. He is like

"My slippers! What a nice boy you are to bring me my slippers! You shall have a kiss for them. One for each!"

a snail and can be traced. I will set you free." He stood erect, fists clenched and determination lining his young features.

"Oh, my dear! My knight-errant! Think well what you are saying. You would commit murder to pay off somebody's score! A somebody who is a stranger!"

"It would not be murder. It would be justice. And you—*you* are not a stranger."

"No? What am I, then?" Her voice was like some forest bird-call, faint, clear, questioning.

"After I have killed him, I will tell you what you are to me." The boy stood proudly above her, with contracted brows.

But she took his two hands in her hands and drew him slowly down to the window seat beside her. "That cannot be," she said, in even tones. "He is dead. Harry is dead. He died in prison."

Then somehow, without either of them being conscious of how it came about, he was on his knees, burying his face in her lap and weeping. She stroked his head, quietly, tenderly, yet with a certainty of hopelessness in her heart.

"Why do you weep?" she asked.

"Because that brute is dead. Now there is nothing I can do to show you how I care for you."

"Dear child!" She soothed him with wise, caressing fingers, as a mother comforts the one she loves. There was a long silence, then very softly she whispered: "You *have* killed him. The black shape of him that was eating my heart. *That's* gone now."

THEY were silent again for a time, her slender fingers touching his hair. Then he sprang abruptly to his feet. "When I come back—it may be in a month—will you let me see you again?"

"Why, of course!" She looked at him with wide eyes. "You will be welcome here." She touched lightly the swelling curve over her heart. "Always you will be welcome."

"And if I am able to offer you something besides myself—if I can tell you that I have gained a fortune—Alice, will you——"

"A fortune!" She was startled.

"Yes. Oh, don't think I am raving. There is a fortune in sight for us. We are shareholders in the expedition. Every man in our crew will be wealthy if this voyage succeeds. Then I will ask you to marry me."

"Poor, dear, foolish boy!" She smiled as if she were humouring a child. "You have me in your arms. And yet you run away after a fortune so that you can marry me. No, I have never seen a man like you before."

"Answer me, Alice. Will you marry me then?"

"Dreamer!" She shrugged her slight shoulders as she turned half away from him. "How can I say what I would do then? To-night I love you. That is all I know. But to-night, this night of nights, you are running madly away for treasure to *buy* my love."

She turned from him and looked out over the harbour as she had sat when he pushed open her door. He stared at her with undecided eyes as he stood with his hand on the door-knob. He longed to stay, yet he felt bound in honour to go. She had suffered, yet for that very reason he could not hold her love cheap. And what had he to offer her? A boy's love. No more!

Abruptly she raised a warning hand toward him and looked below to the courtyard, straining her eyes at the shapes in the moonlight beside the door. "Those assassins!" she murmured. "Durand and the Venezuelan. Do they know that you are here?"

"Yes. They brought me here. Are they waiting?"

"Like cats at a mouse-hole. Don't go down. You are in great danger. Those men are murderers."

"I can look after myself."

"One, against two armed men? I'll wager you have not even a pistol."

"What of it?"

"You are in greater peril than you know. Those men would think nothing of murdering you for a few pieces of silver."

Impulsively he thrust his hands into his pockets and put their contents on the table, a small heap of gold and silver coins. "Now I have nothing," he said. "They will have no reason to murder me."

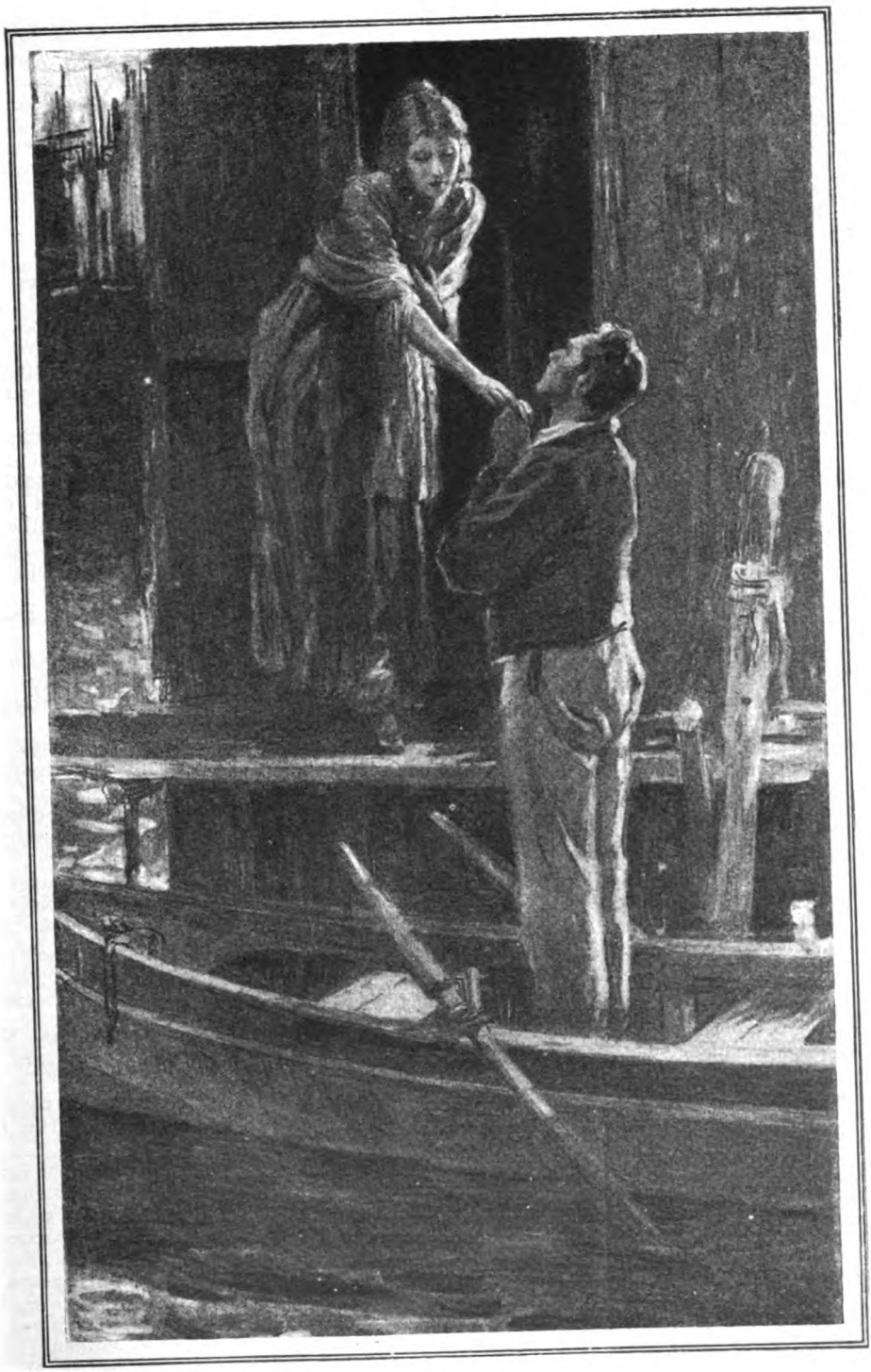
"I will keep the money for you till you come back," she answered.

"No; that is for you. I want you to have it because—because——"

She guessed his meaning and smiled faintly. There were both irony and sadness in her smile. "So be it," she said. "But without that you could depend upon me, for ever. My perfect gentle knight!"

"I must have something from you to carry with me!" he whispered. "Something I can touch and love and caress, because you have touched it. Give me your little white slippers. They brought us together. When I return, I will give them back to you, and you will give me something even more precious."

Silently she pulled off the tiny slippers and laid them in his hands. As he took them, he left a kiss in each soft slender palm. Then he buttoned his jacket over the slippers and went to the door. "I must go now," he said. "The schooner sails on the turn of the tide."



"Good-bye, my lover!"

"Wait," she whispered. "I will see you safely away."

Alice went ahead of him in the darkness down the narrow staircase to the floor below, then led him down the corridor to a closed door. As she pushed it open, the smell of salt water and the harbour mud was suddenly in their nostrils. "Follow me," she urged, and descended a stairway that wound about a narrow well in the interior of the house, ending at a small float anchored beneath the building. The water plashed against its sides and a skiff, hardly seen in the darkness, was swept against the float once in a while with a soft thud.

"This is Ramon's private entrance," she whispered. "It is convenient for landing contraband. See, beyond the pier, there is the moonlight on the water of the harbour. Make no noise. Go now, and God protect you!"

Noiselessly the sailor found the oars and cast loose the rope. "Let the boat drift after you have found your schooner," she whispered. "Ramon will think the skiff broke away. It will be picked up in the morning."

He hesitated before shoving off. "Will you come?" He almost uttered the words that were in his heart, but did not speak them. How could he, a sailor, take her aboard the little vessel setting out on a secret and precarious venture? She would be safer here. He would return in a month, rich, able to carry her away to some new land, where her unhappy past would never humiliate her, where they could make their home together.

"Good-bye, my lover!"

"Good-bye! Good-bye!"

His heart was burdened with premonitions of evil as he sent the skiff away with a strong shove of the oar. In a second or two her figure was but a pale blur in the darkness. Then in a few minutes he was in the open water beyond the ramshackle pier and pulling noiselessly for the middle of the harbour, where his schooner was anchored. Under his jacket he could feel the pressure where her little slippers lay over his heart.

IT was more than a month before the boy returned to that squalid seaport. It was nearer two months, but in that time his dream of wealth had come true. The wreck they had known of, the missing *Golconda*, lying amid a tangle of seaweed in shoal water, had been located and gutted of its gold, and the shareholders who made up the schooner's crew divided the wealth. Each man was master of a fortune.

When the English sailor walked into Gaspar's dusty little shop, his pockets were jingling with sovereigns and he tossed a handful on the counter. The cobbler, a young man in those days, but already dry and reticent, looked with astonishment at the gold, but said nothing, waiting for an explanation of this mad display of opulence.

"Take these little slippers and repair them," commanded the sailor.

Gaspar looked at the slippers critically. "They need repair, milord," he said. "They could do with new heels, new soles, new lining, and new uppers. When I get through there will be little left of these slippers. Why not order a new pair, exactly alike, from this measure?"

"No!" thundered the Englishman. "Nothing must be destroyed. Add to what is there. Peg on new soles with golden nails. Put on patches of the finest soft kid. Repair the lining with the costliest white silk, but take nothing away. And when you have finished set them off with diamond buckles."

"Are you joking, milord?" gasped the cobbler.

"Is this a joke?" and the sailor threw another handful of gold on the table so violently that the glittering discs rolled and danced all over the floor.

"It shall be done as you say," replied Gaspar, humbly. "To-morrow morning the slippers will be ready."

"To-morrow! Why do you think I am paying you the price of your shop? In an hour they must be ready."

"In an hour. So be it." Gaspar almost bowed to the floor. "My helper and I will work like slaves under the lash to satisfy milord. My boy will run for the silk at once. But the buckles, milord! Does my shop look as if it contained a stock of diamond shoe-buckles?"

"I must have diamond buckles. Nothing less will do. These slippers are for a princess."

"Evidently. If milord would condescend to visit the jeweller, just a little farther down the street——"

So while the cobbler was working furiously to earn his gold, the young sailor went from one jeweller to another, finding nothing that was good enough until he had combed the town. In an hour he returned. Beautiful indeed were the little white slippers then, with their new soles, their narrow, dainty heels straightened, their soft lining of white silk, and their buckles, brilliant as tiny constellations. They were worthy of a fairy princess.

The sailor waited for nothing more. He would not eat, he would not drink, until

he had found his lady once more and set those slippers on her adorable feet.

Plunging into the courtyard, where the midday sun beat down upon the walls of shabby disreputable houses and decayed sheds of the enclosure, he looked for her doorway. The court seemed deserted, but as he neared the door, so well-remembered from that wonderful night, the sailor saw that two figures leaned against the doorposts. The black-browed Venezuelan and Durand, the Frenchman who understood cards, were whispering together. It gave the boy an odd sensation; it was as if they had stood there immovable and threatening ever since the night they had pointed the way up that dark staircase.

As he boldly pushed between them, they laughed in each other's eyes as if sharing some sly secret. He did not return the gambler's ironical salutation, but stormed up the rickety stairs, two at a time. At the top of the stairs he halted abruptly, confronted by a figure in black that was merged in the darkness of the passage. Only the face showed white and ghostlike. "Quiet!" she said. "The corpse is in that room." It was the Italian girl who had once coaxed for the coral earrings who spoke. Her eyes were red with weeping.

The sailor reeled. He was forced to steady himself with one hand against the damp wall of the corridor. "Dead!" he gasped.

She nodded. "Si! Your lady of the white slippers. She died last night."

"Last night! Dead!" Convulsively he clutched at his heart. He felt that he, too, was dying. So this was the end! It was for this he had swaggered through the streets with jingling pockets and high hopes.

"Where is the—— Where is she?"

The girl motioned to the door of Doña Pilar's room. It was slightly ajar, and from within came the lights of tapers and the sound of women's voices, muffled and tremulous. "Ah! she was a saint!" exclaimed the Italian. "The whole town loved her."

There was a low wail that cut the heart like a knife, as the boy pushed open the door. At the far end of the room, that was still decked in tattered magnificence, was a massive black coffin on trestles. It was completely covered with a black pall. Candles burned all about it in antique candleholders of silver. Women knelt before it in prayer. There was a sickening perfume of dying flowers, burning wax, and incense, mingled with the indefinable odour of death, in that terrible room.

Like a drunken man, the sailor staggered toward the catafalque, brushing kneeling figures aside, and threw himself over it with outstretched arms as if he would embrace the dead. Ah, why had he left her that night when she lived and loved? Now it was too late. For ever too late. His arms strained against the casket. There was a murmur of horror at this act of sacrilege. The mourners started up in fright at the apparition of the madman or drunkard—they knew not what. One woman ran shrieking from the death chamber. Others followed, clinging to each other in terror.

But the English lad lay there unheeding, motionless as one dead, and beside him on the floor lay the little white slippers with their jewelled buckles flashing in the candle-lights.

THERE was a soft touch on his shoulder, but he did not stir. A hand was laid on his head. He groaned: "Let me alone. She is dead. I do not want to live."

But his cheek was touched by a caress as gentle as the falling petals of a rose, and as he looked up, startled at the kiss, he looked into the eyes of Alice. His princess! Pale, haggard, half-starved, but the lady of his dreams.

In a daze he rose and, holding her by the shoulders, looked into her eyes, trying to convince himself that it was true. "And so you *did* come back!" she said. "When the month was up (and I counted every hour of it) I thought you would never come back. I thought—God forgive me!—you were like the rest."

For answer, he dropped to the floor at her feet, covering them with kisses. Then, as she stooped and caressed his head, he fumbled for the white slippers beside him, and reverently placed them on her slender feet. "My queen!" he whispered.

There was a roar of angry voices outside the windows. Alice started like one who has known terror too well. "Quick, quick! We must leave the house!" she exclaimed. The furious outburst without was already nearer. "Hurry! You are in danger!" she urged. "Listen! They say you have insulted the corpse of Doña Pilar. Come quickly."

She dragged the boy to his feet, and the pair stumbled into the corridor just as the mob of angry women, ruffians, and harbour riff-raff flooded the narrow passage. Devotees, fanatics, and thieves, they were led by two calculating men who knew what they were after: the tall Venezuelan and Durand, the card-player. Both held long knives, held point upwards in sinewy hands accustomed to their use.

"Bonjour, little pigeon, you are snared at last," laughed Durand.

The Venezuelan said nothing, but grunted as he made a lunge at the Englishman. The point slashed through the sleeve of his left arm, thrown up to guard his face. A spurt of blood showed that it had been a good blow.

But the sailor felt a knife-hilt thrust into his right hand, and the next instant had returned the blow with a fury that terrified his assailant and laid open his cheek. With Alice close behind him, shielded by his body, the boy fought his way the length of the corridor amid an uproar of shrieking women and shouting, cursing, snarling cut-throats. The dense crowd that prevented effective blows, and the flickering of two candle flames that threw confusing shadows over the mob, were all that saved the lovers from being cut to pieces. But they were bruised and bleeding from slashes as they stood facing death at the end of the corridor.

"My little doves, you will not give us the slip a second time!" murmured the suave voice of Durand, edging closer with his glittering knife.

Suddenly there was a shrill scream of a woman in terror. One could not tell where the voice came from. "Look out! The police are here!"

In the confusion of men trying to break their way out and others scrambling forward, the onlookers who held the candles above the herd blew them out quickly. It was time to seek cover of darkness. There were few in that stifling corridor who did not dread the police, those arrogant dogs with their military caps and ready sabres.

But at the moment that the lights went out the sailor felt the door at his back gently open. Alice pulled him with her to the staircase leading to the water, and shut the door behind them. "Hold back the crowd while I get the skiff loose and the oars in," she whispered, and was down the stairs like a flying spirit.

The Englishman braced himself against the flimsy door, listening feverishly for the girl's call. He could barely hear the sound of the oars going into the rowlocks, for against the panels that he leaned his weight upon blows were volleyed, and maledictions. Their ruse had been discovered. The sailor felt the door slowly giving on its hinges. He knew that he could not hold that weight much longer. With a final effort he leaped back and vaulted over the handrail of the staircase. As he dropped in the darkness down the well that plunged him into the water he could hear the door give way with a crash. The besiegers were flung pell-mell upon the steps, yelling and calling frantically upon all the saints.

Then he heard no more. He was submerged in the black water, struggling with bursting lungs to kick back to the surface. At last! He drew in the air with a long gasp, and in another instant he had clambered into the skiff and was pulling fiercely at the oars, while Alice steered the little boat toward the harbour. There lay the sun-flooded water beyond the shadows of the pier, and out there lay the schooner, and beyond it the open sea and the way to happiness.

There was but one shot that rang in their ears before they reached the sunlight. The bullet ripped barnacles from the nearest pile and flickered over the surface of the water. There was a jumble of imprecations from the float where the pursuers watched the cursed foreigner escape with the gold that was as good as theirs. But suddenly it was all blotted out. As they came into the sunlight the darkness closed over all that was behind them, like the memory of an evil dream; a menace of the night that becomes confused and fades away with the first hour of awakening in the dawn, until at last it is no longer more than a tale that is told to pass an idle hour.

It was only when the breathless lovers clambered up the rope ladder of the schooner that the girl noticed her loss. "Bad luck!" she cried. "I've dropped a slipper."

THE peddler had finished his cigarette and his story, and Gaspar had finished my boots. To the cobbler I gave silver, but the bearded patriarch received no more than a second cigarette and a smile, that he rightly judged expressed incredulity.

"You do not believe it?" he demanded with some heat. "This story of the mad Englishman's escape?"

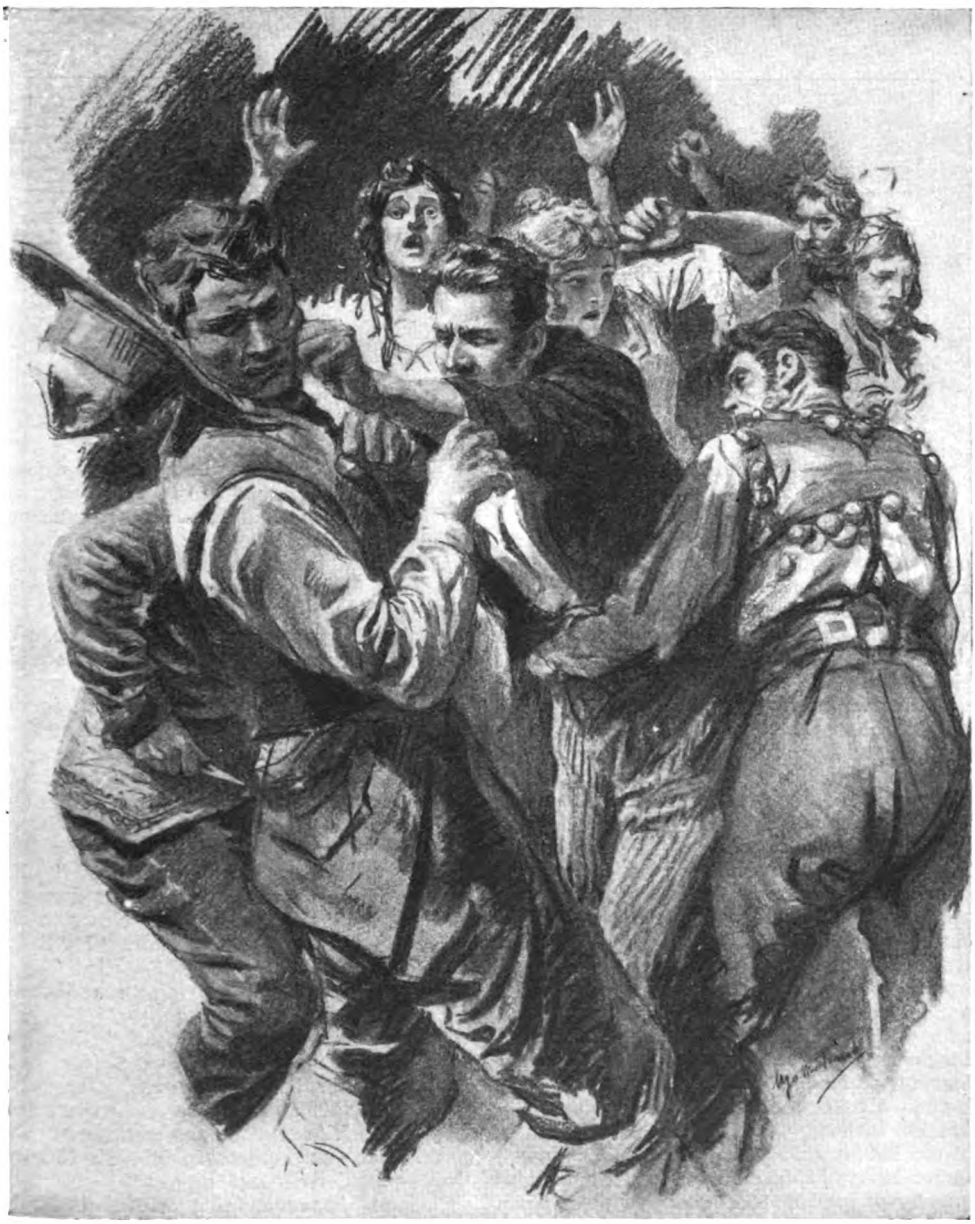
"I should like to believe it," I replied. "God knows this grey world needs touches of the scarlet and gold of romance!"

"Gaspar," shouted the peddler, "he does not believe me! Say, is it all true, Gaspar?"

"Si."

"Show him the proof. Show him what Durand gave you, after he had played cards with the long Venezuelan that same night."

The cobbler rummaged on a dusty shelf among the litter of decades and brought out a package wrapped in newspaper. It was yellow and brittle: no wonder! The date of the paper was about fifty years back. Gaspar spread the wrapping and showed me the contents: a single tiny slipper, ivory in tone and marvellously



The boy fought his way the length of the corridor amid an uproar of shrieking women and snarling cut-throats.

patched and repaired. The lining was delicately pieced out with finest silk, and over the instep clung loose threads that showed where a buckle had been attached.

"You see?" said the peddler. "There *was* a diamond buckle, as I told you."

But I had found two little marks on the ivory-coloured surface that were fairer stuff of romance than any diamonds: a brownish stain that *may* have been blood; a water-stain that *may* have been a tear. And I wondered in what peaceful English home the mate of that forlorn slipper was treasured in a chest with antique silks and lavender.

TRIAL BY ORDEAL

by,

F. BRITTEN AUSTIN

ILLUSTRATED BY A. C. MICHAEL

IN front of the curtain, already raised and dropped half-a-dozen times upon the finale of the last act, old David Kinlan bowed his acknowledgments of the tumultuous vociferation, the storm of ever-renewed hand-claps, which would not be stilled in the crowded house dark beyond the dazzling row of footlights. No form of the histrionic art, perhaps, appeals more to the sound instincts of the great public than a *tour de force* of "character" acting. And David Kinlan's performance was always a *tour de force*. The highbrow coteries professed to find more intellectual actors upon the stage; neither they nor anyone else could find a rival to old Kinlan in the line in which for a quarter of a century he had been supreme. With a genius that approached the uncanny in its realism he could be one day a Malvolio as fantastically thin and brain-sick as the next his Falstaff was immense, rotund, jovial, and *canaille*, a Svengali as crapulously, evilly magnetic as his Charles Surface was the high-spirited, simple-natured born gentleman; his very features seemed to change, the "make-up" become a part of himself, in his vivid identification with the *rôle* assumed. He stood now in the habiliments of a Japanese, slant-eyed under his tight black hair, bowing with a gravity of gesture that was of a piece with the perfection of his Oriental smile, bland, sinister, disturbing, yet inscrutable, carrying on for yet a minute longer in his audience the thrill of his performance.

The applause of even the most enthusiastic house must finish some time. But old David Kinlan, refusing further appearance, was well up the stone stairs to his dressing-room before the last isolated bursts of clapping died away. He pushed open his door with a "Pouf!" of mingled satisfaction and relief. Once more, everything had gone well.

His dresser, alert and long-trained to his habits, divested him of his voluminous kimono, replaced it by a dressing-gown, pulled up the arm-chair, handed him the evening newspaper, opened the box of cigarettes, struck a match, removed the tight black Japanese wig, bent to untie, with deft fingers, the fastenings of his footgear. The old fellow leaned back in his seat, ran his fingers through his short grey hair, incongruous with the grease-painted Orientalization of his features, crude at these close quarters, glanced idly at the headlines of the newspaper in his other hand. Suddenly the cigarette dropped from his mouth.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, in startled horror. "Wait a minute, Deacon!" He kicked his foot irritably out of his dresser's grasp, brought the newspaper closer to his eyes with two hands that shook. "My God! Poor old Charlie! Poor old Charlie!"

The dresser stood waiting in a discreet suspension of his activities.

"Did you see this, Deacon?" The old man looked up at him with a face such as his dresser had never seen. It stared grotesquely at him in that grease-paint mask over an unrelated atrocious emotion. "My best friend—my oldest friend—Sir Charles Croft—murdered—last night!"

"Good heavens, sir! How dreadful, sir!" stammered the dresser, not knowing quite what to say.

"Leave me for a minute or two, Deacon," went on the old man, in an altered voice. "Go and get me a drink—a stiff one—quick!"

The dresser disappeared and Kinlan once more lifted the paper with quivering hands.

"Poor old Charlie!" he muttered. "No—it can't be true—it can't be true—he hadn't an enemy——"

Copyright, 1923, by F. Britten Austin.

But it was true. The newspaper announcement was unequivocal. ". . . Sir Charles Croft, the well-known millionaire, was found murdered early this morning in his country residence, Ravenlands, Berkshire. Details are at present lacking, but it is understood that there is so far no clue to the murderer. . . ."

"My God! Poor old Charlie!" muttered the old man, letting the newspaper drop and covering his eyes with a tight-pressed hand as he crumpled in his chair. "I wish that fellow would be quick with the drink!" He felt sick and faint.

Deacon reappeared, soft-footedly, glass in hand. The old man took it, swallowed down the brandy. Then he nodded, feebly but reassuringly.

"All right, Deacon. I'll ring for you when I want you."

in his brain with so powerful an evocation of the familiar traits that it seemed almost as if he were in communion with the dead man's spirit. He could almost fancy he heard the cheery voice, crisp on a note of sincerity, saw the kindly clever eyes light in the cordial welcoming smile, saw the familiar little tug at the white moustache as they sat talking together and Charles meditated a moment, half-frowning, in the way he had, before coming out with one of his incisive sayings. And now he was lying there dead—*murdered*—down at Ravenlands—in that beautiful country house which was his pride—the actor could visualize every well-known room of it, had been there for the hundredth time the week before last, could still almost feel the firm farewell grip of his friend's hand—it was too ghastly—it was incredible! He glanced

"Did you see this, Deacon? My best friend—my oldest friend—Sir Charles Croft—murdered—last night!"

Just for a minute or so he must—*must*—be alone. Poor old Charlie! The memory of his friend arose vividly in his mind—the very presence of the man, white-haired and white-moustached, hobbling a little with a heavy stick as he had done ever since that motor accident, but the very incarnation of vitality. He gazed at the phantom again at the explicit newspaper for another pang of inescapable realization—leaned on the arm of his chair and buried his face in his hands.

Poor old Charlie! His mind went back to that distant youth when they had been at the 'Varsity together, oars in the same college boat, confederates in the same

"rag," friends still in those far-off difficult London days, when David Kinlan had declined to be a lawyer like his father and Charlie Croft, penniless, was beseeching editors to give him a trial as an outdoor reporter. Shillings had been scarce enough at that period; Kinlan remembered the vanished fried-fish shop in Long Acre where whichever one happened to have a few coins paid. Through thick and thin they had been friends. Friends still when Kinlan had got his first leading part in the provinces; friends when he had come back to find that Charlie had renounced journalism, had started the first nucleus of the subsequently gigantic African Agency on a hint from a fellow named Rhodes. Friends still later when Jenny—Jenny had chosen Charlie (the old man smiled wistfully to himself—he had always told her that she had chosen the right man; and she had, of course—Charlie had gone right up just as he had prophesied he would). He hesitated a moment in mental contemplation of that portrait, its outlines now blurred a little but the dear eyes still kindly-sweet, and shut it again in his heart.

Thank God, Jenny had been spared this! Her death all those years ago now seemed to him scarcely premature since she had gone before this ultimate shattering tragedy. It had brought the two friends even closer—they could talk about her together, did so talk—even as they had watched the little Jessica grow up, year by year, to emotion-stirring resemblance to her mother. *Jessica!* Good heavens, what was he thinking of, sitting here! Jessica must be down at Ravenlands, perhaps alone! Jessica—that god-child who was almost more than that, the nearest he would ever get to a child of his own, to him as to Elia were his Dream-Children . . . "the child of Jenny calls Charles father"—Jessica would be sitting there (he visualized her; her twenty-year-old beauty numbed and stony) waiting for that word from him which must surely come at any moment. He must telegraph—telephone—go down to her! He glanced at his watch. Too late for the midnight train—the first one in the morning, then. Thank God, to-morrow was Sunday!

He sprang up in a sudden access of impatient energy, saw his face reflected in the mirror. The incongruity of that painted mask with the grim reality of the tragedy in his soul jarred him harshly. Hurriedly, with a trembling hand, he smeared his face with grease, rubbed away the paint with a towel, rang furiously for Deacon. As he returned to the dressing-table, his eye fell upon the last line of that newspaper paragraph—"so far no clue to the murderer."

He bent forward to the glass, wiping off his slanting eyebrows, muttered to himself.

"By God, Charlie, if it's in human power we'll find the scoundrel!"

In the strained excitement of his mind it seemed for a flitting instant as if he saw Charlie's face looking over his shoulder, reflected in the mirror, the eyes vivid in approval of this grimly uttered vow. It was hallucination, of course, but it gave him a little shock.

"I mean it, Charlie—I mean it," he repeated, feigning to himself the reality of that spectral presence. "Trust me!" He glanced round at the entrance of the dresser. "Quick, Deacon—I want to get home—up early to-morrow morning!"

THAT next morning David Kinlan sat with Jessica Croft, white-faced but dry-eyed and quiet, in the hushed house that mourned its dead. The sound of church bells had floated across the intervening park-land as she told him of the tragedy, succinctly, without tears, though she had swallowed at the climax and twisted her handkerchief tightly in her hands.

"But we're going to find who did it," she finished, through her little white teeth.

He looked at her, looked in vain in this marble-faced girl with the sombre eyes for the Jessica he had seen grow up. She seemed years older, suddenly different. The soft winning charm of her mother had disappeared. This was Charlie's daughter, the determination which had underlain his smilingly forceful character showing stark in her like an outcrop of rock when a storm has stripped away its turf.

"We most certainly are!" he agreed.

They were alone. There had been guests, but they had departed on the previous day from this house of death, after an exculpatory interrogation by the County Police. He broke the pause of silence.

"And there is absolutely no clue?"

"None." The sombre eyes came round to him, burning with deep fires. "But we shall find a clue—somewhere—some time—I am sure of it! It came to me in the night—while I was praying—*certainty*—I felt it flood into me as though——" her eyes held him, "—as though father had promised." He nodded. "I shall never rest until I find his murderer."

He reached for her hand, pressed it.

"Nor I," he said. In her sombre eyes a little flash of gratitude thanked him for the quietly grim resolution of his tone.

There was a tap at the door. The butler appeared

"The police again, miss," he announced, deprecatingly.

"Show them in," she said.

An inspector entered, harassed-looking for all his burly bulk of body, followed by a gentlemanly man in a lounge-suit.

"Sorry to trouble you again, miss," said the inspector. "This is Detective Jones from Scotland Yard. We telephoned to them last night. This case beats us."

The two seated themselves at her invitation.

The detective spoke, unexpectedly pleasant-voiced.

"If you will permit me to ask you a few questions, Miss Croft——?" He glanced queryingly at Kinlan.

"By all means," she said. "This gentleman is my father's oldest and best friend. There is nothing he should not know."

"Very good, then," acquiesced the detective, opening his notebook. "The inspector here has already given me the outlines of the case—apparently there was no indication of any entrance from the outside, every door and window was barred and bolted, there were no footprints on the flower-beds, no disturbance of the shrubs around the house——"

"Nothing," corroborated the inspector. "I was called by telephone at six a.m. yesterday morning, and I arrived here on my bicycle at twenty minutes past. Nothing had been touched or altered—except for letting me and the doctor in through the front door everything was still locked-up for the night. I went most carefully over everything and round the house from the outside. No one broke in, I'm sure of that."

The detective nodded. "Unless something should after all have escaped the observation of my colleague, that narrows us down," he said. "But we'll start from the beginning, Miss Croft. Would you be good enough to tell me what you personally know of this terrible business?"

THE girl's marble-white face twitched as she mastered the emotion that surged up with vivid reminiscence.

"I was awakened yesterday morning a little before six by the housemaid. She had gone into my father's study to tidy it—it was her first task in the morning—my father liked to work early, before breakfast. She came to me gasping, sobbing, and frightened. I could not make out at first what had happened, but I realized that it was something dreadful. I went with her to the study—and—and there was my father, with his head down on the desk at which he had been seated. There was a terrible wound in the back of his head. On the floor was a revolver——"

"I showed it you, Mr. Jones," put in the inspector.

"It was my father's own revolver—the one he kept in his desk."

"One chamber had been discharged—and the bullet which killed Sir Charles has been found," interpolated the inspector again. "It was certainly fired from that revolver."

The detective glanced at his notes.

"The doctor's report puts it out of the question that he could have fired that shot himself," he remarked. "Go on, Miss Croft."

"I ran to the telephone and called up Dr. Merritt and the police."

"What sort of light was there in the room?"

"The shutters were still closed and barred. The electric light was on, but the housemaid told me she switched it on herself. She found the room in darkness."

"Any sign of struggle?"

"None."

The detective jotted down a few lines in his notebook.

"Very good, Miss Croft," he said. "Presently I will get you to show me the room, and I will also interrogate the servants. But first I want to ask you a few more questions. Had your father any enemies that you know of?"

"So far as I am aware he had not an enemy in the world."

"And the servants—or previous servants—none of them had a grudge against him?"

"They all loved him—all of them," she replied, with emphasis. "And my father had never discharged one—those that left did so to get married."

"H'm! That makes one hypothesis improbable," remarked the detective, scribbling in his book. "Still—one never knows. And now—there were other people staying in the house?"

"Four," replied the girl.

"Friends of your father?"

"Yes. I can't believe for a moment that any one of them could possibly have——"

"Quite. But we must not neglect any possibility, however remote. Would you mind telling me the names of these guests—and anything you know about them?"

"I interrogated them all myself, Mr. Jones," interrupted the inspector. "Not one of them knew that the crime had occurred until I told them. They were all dreadfully shocked. I don't think there's any suspicion in that quarter."

"Probably not. Yet it seems this murder was committed by someone in the house. If Miss Croft would be good enough to tell

me all she knows about these guests——" He turned again to her.

"There was Mrs. Windrum," began the girl. Her white face twitched.

David Kinlan frowned involuntarily. He did not like the little he had seen and the more he had heard whispered of Mrs. Windrum in these past few months. There had been nothing that could be called scandal, of course—everything, if anything there was, had been most discreet—*but*—the thought of her jarred on a sentimental memory of poor Jenny.

"Mrs. Windrum," repeated the detective, writing down the name. "And who is she?"

"She is a widow—a lady well known in society," answered Jessica, in a tone of perfect composure.

The detective looked at her, probed her steady eyes.

"Was she—excuse the question — an *intimate* friend of Sir Charles?" he asked.

"My father had known her for some time," the girl replied, her voice quietly level. "She came with her brother, Mr. Edgar Barnfield. They arrived on Friday to spend the week-end."

KINLAN admired the loyalty with which the girl threw a veil over her father's possible peccadillo. He approved the equivocation at which he guessed. There was no sense in publicly washing dirty linen of that sort. It would not help. Mrs. Windrum had certainly far more interest in old Charlie alive than dead. All this passed through his mind in a lightning-flash of thought; the detective was continuing his interrogation.

"Mr. Barnfield? Who is he?"

"A business associate of my father's. He joined the board of the African Agency about a year ago."

Kinlan pondered the name as the detective wrote it down. He had met Edgar Barnfield once or twice, and, despite the business man's bluff cordiality—Barnfield was a big, hearty man, rotund about the middle, radiating an atmosphere of good-fellowship, shrewdly humorous—he had been conscious of a lurking lack of sympathy. But Barnfield was out of the question as the murderer of Charles Croft. His fortune was bound up with the African Agency—and there would assuredly be a nasty slump in those shares when the Stock Exchange opened on Monday. The detective looked up from his notebook.

"They were good friends?" he queried.

"Very, I believe," replied the girl. "When father went to South Africa in the early part of this year, Mr. Barnfield carried on for him in London as managing director."

"When did Sir Charles return?"

"A little more than a month ago."

"Well, that doesn't help us much. Who else was staying in the house?"

"Mr. Armytage and Colonel Frampton."

"And can you tell me anything about them?"

"Colonel Frampton is an elderly man—a very old friend of my father's. He retired from the Army many years ago—something to do with the Jameson Raid, I think. He often visits here."

Kinlan nodded to himself. He knew old Frampton well. He shrewdly suspected that the old fellow had been mixed up in more than one queer business when South Africa was in the making and in certain circumstances might not be too scrupulous. But he and Charlie were old cronies, loved each other. It was unthinkable that he should be the man.

"And Mr. Armytage?"

The slightest tinge of colour came into the girl's white cheeks. Kinlan noticed it, waited with a sudden quickening of interest for her answer. Who was this Mr. Armytage? Surely his little Jessica had not grown up enough for—— She was speaking.

"Mr. Armytage is the son of Sir Edward Armytage, the member of Parliament. My father met him for the first time at Ascot and invited him down for this week-end."

"You had never met him before?"

"Yes—I had known him for some time."

The detective looked at her innocently.

"He is a young man, I presume?"

"Twenty-seven."

The detective's eyes went a little more penetrating as they rested on her.

"You could not imagine any motive——?" he began, delicately.

"Oh, no! It's not possible!" she exclaimed, impulsively, whole-heartedly emphatic.

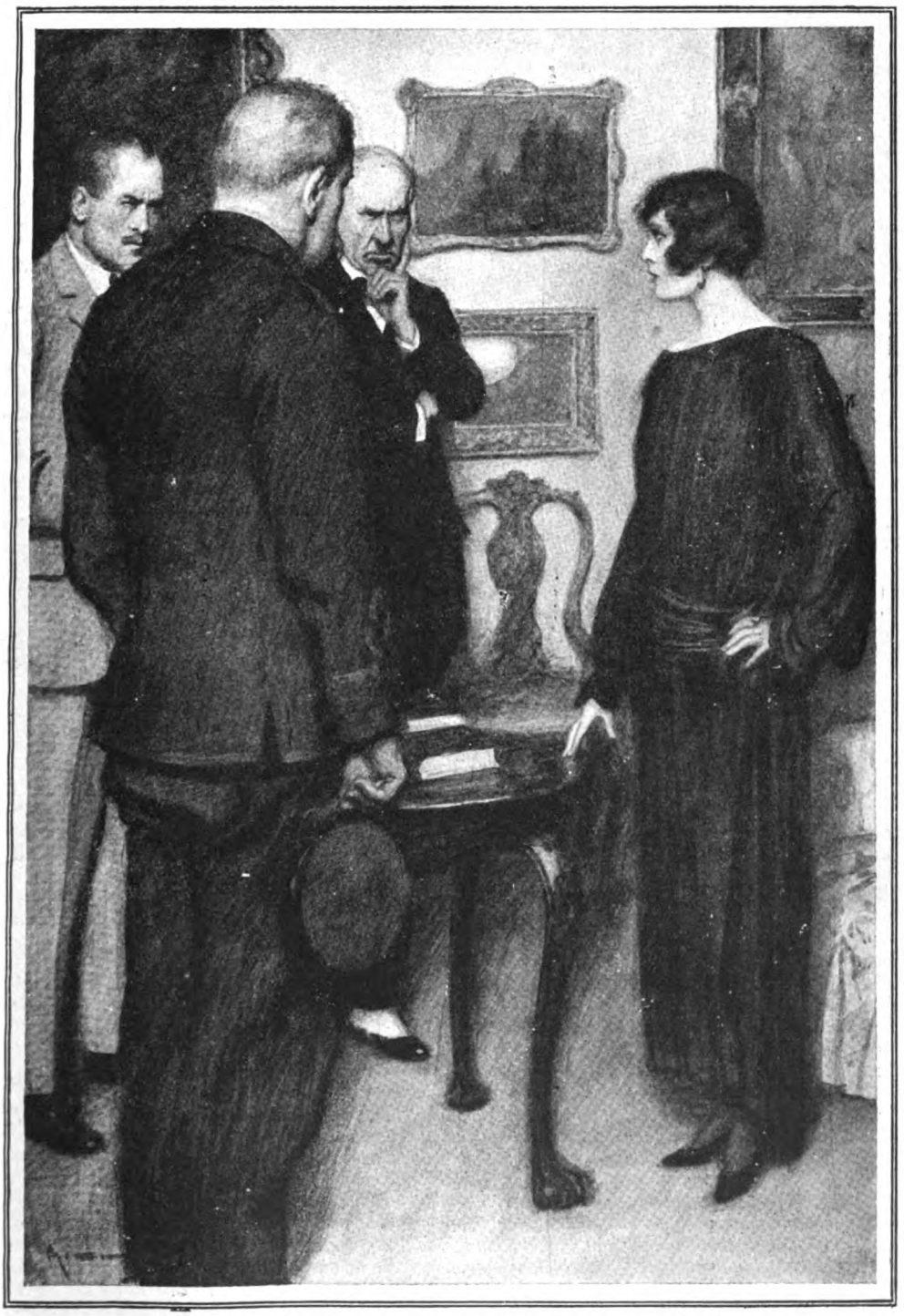
"Is he a man of means?" hazarded the detective, bending down again to his notebook.

"Not at present—er—really," the tinge came again into her cheeks, a slight confusion into her manner, "I have no right to discuss Mr. Armytage's private affairs—but I am sure he will be more than ready to answer any questions you may wish to ask him."

The detective nodded, closed his notebook.

"Thank you, Miss Croft. Now, supposing we go and look at Sir Charles's study? It is on the first floor, I believe? Perhaps you will be kind enough to show the way."

Kinlan also rose from his seat, and, with



"Sorry to trouble you again, miss," said the inspector. "This is Detective Jones from Scotland Yard. We telephoned to them last night. This case beats us."

the inspector, followed Jessica as she led the detective upstairs.

They halted outside the door while the inspector searched in his pocket for the key which had locked it.

"There is another question I must ask you, Miss Croft," said the detective, profiting by the pause. "At what hour on Friday night did you last see your father?"

"At eleven o'clock. He then went, as he usually did, to his study. Mrs. Windrum and I went up to bed. I saw her into her room."

"And the gentlemen?"

"Mr. Barnfield and Colonel Frampton were playing billiards. Mr. Armytage, I believe, went for a walk in the park."

"That is correct, Mr. Jones," said the inspector, producing his own notebook. "Mr. Armytage stated that he went for a breath of fresh air in the park, returned at eleven-forty-five, and went straight to bed. That is corroborated by the butler, who locked up after him. The other two gentlemen played billiards until just after midnight—twelve-ten, to be quite precise—and then they also went to bed. The butler turned out the lights in the billiard-room at twelve-fifteen. He heard and noticed nothing unusual."

"The body was found at six a.m., or thereabouts. About what time does the doctor think death took place?" queried Kinlan.

"The doctor thought Sir Charles had been dead for four or five hours, sir," replied the inspector.

He opened the door and the four of them entered the room, still shuttered, illuminated only by the electric light, which the inspector switched on. It was just as it had been found when the tragedy was discovered, save that the body had been removed. There was no sign of any struggle. There was only a dark patch on the carpet close to the desk, a dark stain on the blotting-pad at which Sir Charles had been sitting. Kinlan felt for the girl's hand, pressed it tightly. He heard her draw her breath.

"The revolver was found here—just behind the chair," said the inspector, indicating a point on the carpet.

"H'm," said the detective, "behind the body." He went across to the desk, tried the drawers. They were all locked, save a small one which came open at his tug.

"That was the drawer in which my father kept his revolver," explained the girl. "I once happened to see it. But he usually kept it locked."

The detective nodded, looked carefully over the desk, on which there was nothing but the blotting-pad, marked with a few lines of reversed impression on a clean white space beyond the dark stain. He picked it up, went to the mirror with it, held it so that the reversed impression was again reversed in the reflection. They all drew close to see it. The words showed clear and neat:—

29th June, 1923.
Charles Croft,
bearer.

Self ————
One thousand pounds ————
1,000———— *Charles Croft.*

"H'm!" said the detective. "The twenty-ninth—that's Friday, the very day! A cheque, evidently—and altered to bearer—cash over the counter at the bank. A thousand pounds is a lot of money—can you suggest any reason why your father should draw such an amount for his personal use, Miss Croft?"

"No—it is extraordinary," said the girl, plainly puzzled.

"Nor any person to whom he might wish to make such a discreet payment—as good as cash?" continued the detective.

"No one," she replied, with emphasis.

"Can we find out at what time on Friday that cheque was drawn—when was this blotter renewed? This is the only writing upon it."

"I will ring for the maid," said Jessica.

THE maid appeared, shy and nervous. She was positive that she put clean blotting-paper for Sir Charles at about nine o'clock on Friday evening—while the family was at dinner. She always came in at that time, and tidied up before Sir Charles set himself to his nightly hour or so of work. Sir Charles was very particular about always having clean blotting-paper. She was permitted to withdraw.

"So, evidently, Sir Charles wrote this cheque after eleven o'clock on that Friday night," said the detective. "What has happened to it?"

"It wasn't in the room, I'll swear to that," asseverated the inspector.

"Has anyone cashed it, I wonder?" ventured Kinlan. "There was time yesterday. Did anyone leave this house for London by a train that would have arrived by noon?"

"They all went up together by the ten o'clock express," said Jessica.

"If we can find who handled that cheque," said the detective, "we ought to be on the track. It must have been given to someone in this room after eleven o'clock that night. But," he added, as a corollary struck him, "the counterfoil ought to be about some-

where—it might give us a hint." He tugged at the locked drawers again. "Where are the keys, inspector?"

"Here, Mr. Jones," replied the inspector, producing them. "I took them from Sir Charles's trouser-pocket."

The detective unlocked a drawer. The cheque-book was lying at the top of it. He picked it out, turned back the last counterfoil.

"Here we are. 'Self—£1,000'—that doesn't help much—but—it's curious! Sir Charles must have quietly locked away his cheque-book and put the keys in his trouser-pocket after writing that cheque—*just before he was shot.* If the person who did it was the person who had the cheque, he must have been a pretty cool customer."

"Shot him with Sir Charles's own revolver, too," remarked the inspector. "It beats me."

It beat Kinlan also. He racked his brains for some hypothesis that was at least plausible—and found none. The whole thing was a mystery to him, as it evidently was to Jessica. There was just one chance—someone might try to cash that cheque and give a clue. On that he built his hopes, but they were not confident. Who would be fool enough to present such a cheque?

There was nothing more to be done in that room. The detective went all round the house, interrogated the servants, without eliciting the slightest hint of a clue. Finally he departed. Kinlan was left alone with Jessica.

"But we'll find out yet!" she said, through her little white teeth, staring out into the park.

He pressed her hand.

"We will, my dear." And he meant it. A sombre fire burned in him also.

THE next afternoon, as the train whirled him up to town in time for the evening's show, he leaned back in his carriage and conned over the problem as he had conned it over all through the wakeful night. The detective had sent a telegram, as he had promised. It was negative. "*Cheque not yet presented.*" Who *could* it be? For whom could Charlie—quite unhurried, as was evident from the neat, careful handwriting—have written that cheque just before he was killed? Who could it possibly be? It must have been one of those four in the house—but how?—and why?—and *which?* How prove it? Or was it not one of them at all—someone else? But *who?* His thoughts ran wearily round and round that central crux like whipped horses on a mill-pole.

"But we'll find him yet, Charlie," he muttered grimly to himself. "Trust me!"

He had a sudden little retrospective vision of himself before the mirror rubbing off the grease-paint of his Japanese make-up, muttering those same words—and the hallucination of Charles, white-haired, white-moustached, vivid-eyed, looking over his shoulder. And with that vision, he could not say how or why, independent of himself, the tiniest germ of a vague idea popped up in his mind—linked itself to a blurred memory of some sensational French criminal process he had read in the paper a week or two back—what did they call it?—"*reconstitution.*" He smacked a fist into the other hand. The germ developed itself as he contemplated it—became something like a possibility.

"We might try it," he muttered to himself, "if everything else fails. For I mean it, Charlie. We'll find the scoundrel—man or woman!"

IT was a month later. The murder of Sir Charles Croft had filled the more sensational newspapers for a week—and then, in the absence of any clue, had dropped out of the public mind. There was not the slightest pointer of suspicion towards any individual, known or unknown. That mysterious cheque had never been presented. Scotland Yard had investigated the private life of every person even remotely connected with the case—and confessed itself baffled. To Kinlan's anxious inquiries on behalf of Miss Croft, the Department returned soothing, vaguely hopeful answers. The official who signed the letters shrugged his shoulders as he took up the pen. Short of a miracle now, the Ravenlands Case would be added to the long list of unsolved mysteries.

All this old David Kinlan pondered as the early-evening train took him down once more into Berkshire. At the theatre that night an understudy was being given his chance.

Jessica was waiting for him at the station, in her great grey motor-car, already softly purring, threw open for him the door to the front seat, where she was at the wheel. He tossed a shilling to the porter who brought along his suit-case and settled himself beside her. They whirred off towards the sunset.

He smiled at her.

"Are they all here?"

She smiled back, rather tensely, her face white.

"Yes—all of them. I left them changing for dinner."

"You have given no hint?"

She shook her head. "No."

"Not even to——" He raised his eyebrows at her.

"No. Not even to——" She smiled

again at the name both left unspoken, a touch of wistfulness in the smile. "But, believe me, David dear, it is not he."

"I'm not saying who it is," he returned, stubbornly. "That we shall see. What did you write to each of them to get them here?"

"What you told me"—she swerved suddenly to avoid a ruminative cow—"that I needed their assistance in a matter connected with poor father."

"Surprised to meet each other, I suppose?"

She smiled a little.

"I think they were," she admitted. "No one had any idea that I had written to the others. They all looked a little awkward."

"H'm!" he grunted. "And the detective fellow?"

"He's there, too. I have arranged for him as you said."

The car swung up a comparatively unused drive between overhanging elms.

"Near enough," he said.

They stopped and he opened the door to descend. As he left her, she turned, looked him earnestly, apprehensively, in the eyes, spoke with a voice that betrayed nerves at tension.

"David dear, do you really believe we shall find out anything to-night?"

"With God's help—yes," he replied. His darkly saturnine features set hard, his thin lips pressed themselves to a straight line—scarcely parted for the terse qualification, "We can but try."

They exchanged a little smile of mutual confidence and understanding, pathetically wistful on her part, and then she pressed on the accelerator. The car shot forward, leaving him behind. She had one last glance at him disappearing into the adjacent shrubbery as she turned the bend in the drive. The next moment she emerged to the near prospect of the picturesquely ivy-mantled stables of the sixteenth-century mansion. No windows of the house looked in this direction. She ran the car into the garage and, with a whispered word, handed over Kinlan's suit-case to a man-servant waiting there expectant of her.

A QUARTER of an hour later, as the dinner gong was booming through the house, Jessica Croft, beautiful in the severe simplicity of her black frock, descended the broad staircase into the hall. Her four guests were already there—Mrs. Windrum, violet-eyed, blonde and henna-tinged, somewhat sharp-curved from cheekbone to the chin, approaching a haggard forty under the exquisitely well-executed artificiality of her complexion, gowned in black discreetly relieved from full mourning by the flash of jewels at waist and throat; old Colonel Frampton, exchanging staccato gallantries with the faded aunt installed to safeguard the respectabilities; Edgar Barnfield, Mrs. Windrum's brother, rotund in visage and protuberant at the waist, submerging with an obvious effort his natural instinct to expansive joviality under the serious air required of him by the occasion as he talked with young Armytage. The young man turned and smiled at her, meeting her glance with candid eyes that looked for a flicker of intimacy in hers. She held herself tightly. Whoever it was, it could not be he! Yet—were the others less unlikely? One of those four, David had said, demonstrated it damningly. She felt herself turn to ice within.

It seemed to be tacitly understood that whatever business had called them together should not be discussed until after dinner. It was a monosyllabic affair in the magnificently panelled dining-room. The dead man's presence still pervaded it. The conversation flitted awkwardly from triviality to triviality, dried up into disconcerting silences. Only once was the tragedy even remotely referred to; when Barnfield ruefully mentioned to Armytage the consequent drop in Agency shares—"bad news on top of it, of course—there would be!" It was particularly rough on him, since he had perforce to act as managing director for the moment. Jessica's hostess-smile scarcely broke the marble-like rigidity of her countenance. It was a relief when at last the dinner came to an end.

As they all went back again into the hall Barnfield caught up Jessica.

"Well, little lady," he said, with benevolent familiarity, "and what can I do for you? Lawyers playing you up, eh?"

Jessica half smiled at him.

"I'll tell you presently," she replied, calmly mistress of herself. "Would you please come upstairs—all of you?" Her glance swept round the others, collected them. They followed her, wonderingly, but refraining from comment; evidently they would soon know what Miss Croft required of them. Mrs. Windrum skittishly begged a light for her cigarette from one of the three men as they went upstairs. The faded aunt disappeared.

Jessica led the way along a corridor, stopped before a door, threw it open. They passed into a large room, lined with books and softly illumined with a shaded lamp or two. A heavy writing desk, with an unlit reading lamp upon it, stood half-way along the wall, under the bookshelves. A divan and a couple of leather-covered arm-chairs offered comfort nearer to the entrance.

But the guests remained on their feet, staring about them in bewildered astonishment. It was old Colonel Frampton who gave expression to it, jerking his head about from side to side like a startled bird.

"But, good God!" he broke out, "surely this is——"

Jessica came forward from the door.

"Yes," she said, succinctly, "this is the room in which my poor father was murdered."

Mrs. Windrum looked at her with a face that had gone white.

"But, my *dear*," she protested, "how—how gruesome! Surely it isn't necessary——"

"Gives one the creeps!" commented Barnfield. "Poor old Charlie!" He turned with a little smile to his hostess. "I hope you don't intend to keep us here long, Miss Croft. There are pleasanter spots."

Young Armytage remained silent, his glance at Jessica puzzled but acquiescent in whatever she wished.

Jessica did not smile.

"I am afraid I must ask you to resign yourselves to it for a little time. Won't you sit down, all of you?" She waited a moment while they complied. "It was for this that I invited you. I want you to be good enough to sit with me in this room—you four who were the only visitors in this house on the night my poor father was killed. I think something may happen which"—she paused, her face like chiselled marble—"which may reveal his murderer."

"Why, does his ghost walk, then?" said old Frampton, in a tone of sharp alarm.

"Oh, I hope not!" breathed Mrs. Windrum, flutteringly. "I couldn't stand that!"

"Nonsense!" said Barnfield; "there's no such thing as ghosts."

"I don't like it, all the same," grumbled the old colonel. "What's the idea, Jessica?"

SHE seated herself without answering. They all relapsed into an uneasy, fidgety silence. The hush persisted. The cigarette between Mrs. Windrum's dainty fingers went extinct and cold, and old Colonel Frampton, with a growl of dislike for the brand, crushed his out in the ash-tray. Only Barnfield continued to smoke, with the slightly contemptuous air of a man whose nerves are fancy-proof.

"Have you—have you *seen* anything in this room, Miss Croft?" inquired young Armytage in an awed voice.

She held up her finger for silence.

"*Please!*" she said.

Barnfield shifted in his chair.

"This is childishly absurd!" he said, irritably. "No one's more sorry about poor old Charlie than I am—but if this is all that Miss Croft has got us here for to-night——"

He stopped short. Every light in the room went out simultaneously. They stared into black darkness.

"Good God!" exclaimed old Colonel Frampton, shakily. "The light's failed now!"

A frightened gasp came from Mrs. Windrum.

They could have counted the seconds during which they stared sightlessly. Then suddenly, as disconcerting to the nerves as that sudden darkness, a lamp sprang into radiance half-way down the room. It was the shaded reading-lamp upon the desk, its full illumination falling only upon the white blotting-pad and the vacant seat. Jessica could hear the tensely-drawn breaths of the group sitting close to her in the scarcely modified obscurity. What was coming next? They stared, fascinated, at that illumined desk, expectant of—they hardly dared imagine what might come.

"Has—has this happened before?" whispered Barnfield.

"*Shh!*" said Jessica.

Yet another moment or two, and then—a door opened in the dimly-lit distant end of the room. What was that that entered? It defined itself—a man, nothing of him at first clearly distinguishable in the shadow save that he was in a dinner-jacket, his shirt-front a white patch in the gloom. He came forward—hobbling a little on a heavy stick—emerged into a fuller light. There was a gasp from the watchers. It was—*it was—Sir Charles Croft!*

Held breathless, their hearts seeming to stop in their breasts, they watched him approach—white-haired—white-moustached—hobbling cheerfully on his stick—every familiar move and gesture of the man—his very smile upon the well-known features! He came nearer, moving towards his desk—turned his face towards the shadowed group—smiled again with that familiar little jerk of his head.

Armytage felt his arm nipped painfully in Mrs. Windrum's sudden clutch.

"I shall scream in a minute!" she muttered, audibly.

The figure made no sound. It seated itself with that awkward bump into the chair that his game leg had imposed on Sir Charles Croft—rested its elbow upon the desk—turned its head towards the

awe-struck group in the shadows—smiled again.

"My God!" ejaculated old Frampton.

"Nonsense!" murmured Barnfield. "Don't be a fool—keep quiet!" He was answering a whisper of his sister, seated between him and Armytage.

They sat fixed and tense, incapable of motion, staring at that seated figure.

"What—what's he come for?" stammered old Frampton, in a half-voice.

"*You know!*" They jumped—it was the very utterance—incisive—crisp—light-toned—of Sir Charles Croft.

"Edgar—take me out!" gasped Mrs. Windrum. "I'm going to faint—I can't stand it!"

"The door is locked," murmured Jessica, softly but distinctly.

"*On that Friday night, one of you four came into this room,*" continued the seated figure, smiling at them with a subtly grim malice—they quivered at the familiar *timbre* of the voice. "*Let that one of you come forward now——*"

"My God!" breathed Barnfield. But he did not move. No one moved. A paralysis lay upon them—the paralysis of the presence of the supernatural.

"*Let that one of you come forward!*" The tone was sharply authoritative.

Jessica felt her heart thump hard in that pause of suspense where no one moved—and then there was a stir among the group. Someone was rising to his feet, going forward. He came into the light. She gasped, clutched with tense fingers at her chair. It was young Armytage!

He advanced hesitatingly towards the figure seated at the desk.

"*Near enough, young man!*"

Armytage halted, mopped his brow with his handkerchief.

"*Say to me now what you said then!*"

The young man cleared his throat, moistened his lips.

"*The exact words!*"

"Yes—yes, sir," faltered the young man. He commenced like a scholar reciting a lesson. "I—I saw a streak of light from under your window while I was in the park, Sir Charles, and as I had something on my mind I ought to tell you, I—I have ventured to disturb you."

The figure nodded.

"*Go on!*"

"I hate to say it, Sir Charles—but quite by chance I happened to overhear a lady with whom you are intimate—it was the other day, in the lounge at the Regal—I was behind some palms, reading a newspaper—the place looked empty—I suddenly caught your name and couldn't help listening——"

"*What did she say?*"

"A man was threatening her—blackmail, evidently—using your name—I don't want to go into details, Sir Charles—the end of it was she said, 'I'll have to do old Charlie down for a bit more—I can twist him round my little finger—give me a week.' It's been worrying me ever since, Sir Charles—and I felt it was my duty to tell you, though it's a loathsome thing to do."

"*And the lady?*"

"She is staying in this house, Sir Charles."

"*And what did I say then?*"

"You made me give my word that under no circumstances—on Jessica's—Miss Croft's—account—would I reveal this conversation to anyone."

"*That is correct.*" There was a pause. "*Do you remember the time of this conversation?*"

"The clock struck twelve as we spoke, Sir Charles."

The young man stood staring awkwardly at the seated figure, waiting for its next words.

"*Good night!*"

"Goo—good night, Sir Charles." Armytage returned stumblingly to his seat in the darkness.

"I—I wish I could faint!" gasped Mrs. Windrum.

"'Shh!" whispered Colonel Frampton, stern in his hushed awe. "Perhaps he'll go now!"

The figure smiled again towards them.

"*That next person!*" it said, incisively.

THERE was a pause—a choking, gasping, hysterical sob from the obscurity. Someone else was moving. It was Mrs. Windrum. She came forward with a little rush that checked suddenly, hands stretched out.

"Charlie!—Charlie!—if it *is* you!—I know I came here that night—but you know I didn't do it!—you know I didn't do it!"

"*Say to me now what you came to say then.*"

The woman stammered, swaying on her feet.

"I—I—came to ask you to give me some money—as Mr. Armytage has said."

The eyes under the white brows probed her.

"*That is not correct!*"

"No—no——" She swallowed, gasped, swallowed again. "I—I know it isn't—I—I came to ask you to let Edgar do—do as he wanted. To—to——"

"*To twist me round your little finger for him?*"

She nodded, gaspingly.

"And what was it he wanted me to do?"

"You—you remember—you had already quarrelled——" she spoke with a trembling veracity, in the very presence of Sir Charles's spirit—"about the Agency—about publishing the accounts he had prepared while you were away—and about that cablegram."

"Go on!"

"Don't pretend you don't know, Charlie!"

"Go on!" came the incisive, inexorable voice.

She gasped and swallowed.

"You remember—he had arranged things—while you were away—he was in difficulties—he—he had sold for a fall—and then that cablegram came in—about the oil-wells—it meant ruin to him if that cablegram was published on Monday. You remember it?"

"He wanted me to commit a fraud on my own shareholders?"

She nodded.

"Yes," she said, weakly. "You remember—those were your very words."

"It's a fantastic lie—all of it!" It was Barnfield's voice, thick with a frightened fury. *"Freda!"* He half rose from his seat, as though to pull her back. Armytage restrained him with a firm hand, forced him to immobility.

The two figures in the light ignored him.

"And what did I do then?"

"You—you looked at me—as you are looking now—and then—then you unlocked your drawer, took out your cheque-book, wrote a cheque, locked up the book again—and I—I got frightened. Then you looked up at me and—and said——" she checked.

"'You want a little money, I believe? Here it is—the last!'"

"Yes," she gasped. "That was it."

"And what then?"

"Nothing—nothing—I—I don't want to—oh, don't torture me, Charlie!—you know well enough what you said to me!"

"I say it again—send your brother to me!—as he came that night!"

Mrs. Windrum gave a little choking cry, went staggeringly back to her seat.

THERE was a tense silence. It seemed like a moment in a dream.

"By God, Barnfield—I think you had better go!—or we shall draw conclusions!" It was old Colonel Frampton, his voice ominously menacing.

Barnfield rose hesitatingly to his feet, went unwillingly a step or two forward, stopped. He stood, breathing hard, in silence. In the stronger light they could see the sweat pearling on his brow.

The figure at the desk smiled again, unpleasantly.

"Well, Edgar?" The half-mocking, rising inflexion was startlingly the voice of Charles Croft.

Barnfield shrank back, made an inarticulate noise in his throat.

"W-what do you want?" he managed to get out, half in quivering fear, half in a bravado of defiance.

The figure smiled, with a glint in its eyes.

"I want you to repeat what you said—and did—that night. You threatened a little violence, I believe."

Barnfield swayed in front of it.

"No," he said, hoarsely, "no. I've done it too many times already—every night—and you know it."

"Precisely," the seated figure smiled at him, quietly unlocked a drawer in the desk, took out a revolver, *"but you're going to do it again. This is what I did, isn't it—when you became threatening?"* He dandled the revolver. *"And I asked you for your resignation—on the spot!"*

"I gave in," gasped Barnfield. "You know I did. I agreed to write my resignation—and if you hadn't put temptation in my way——"

"Quite," acquiesced the figure. *"Like this, wasn't it?"* He put the revolver down upon the desk. *"Now come and write that resignation—just as you did that night!"*

Barnfield hesitated.

"Come!" said the figure at the desk, in incisive, grimly malicious command, *"just as you did that night—you've got to go through with it again!"*

The man swayed, his fingers working. "No!" he jerked out.

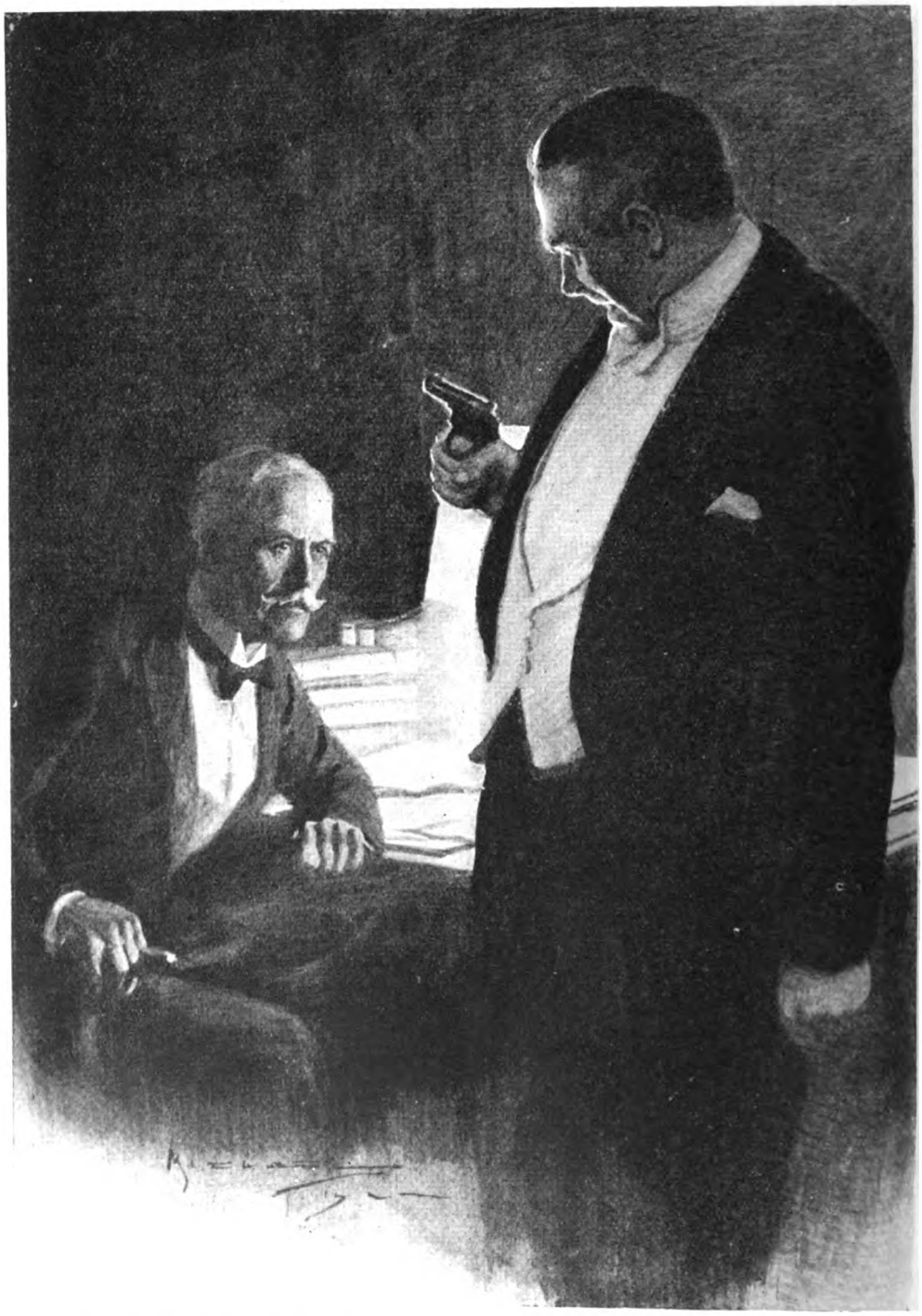
"You will—just as you'll do it every night you live!"

The tortured wretch emitted a hoarse cry of maddened hate and despair. "Damn you, then—ghost or not—I will!" He sprang forward, snatched up the revolver, clapped it to the back of the head of the seated figure. There was no detonation. Instead, the figure jumped up, with a quick movement plucked off white wig and moustaches. Barnfield staggered back. *"Kinlan—David Kinlan!"*

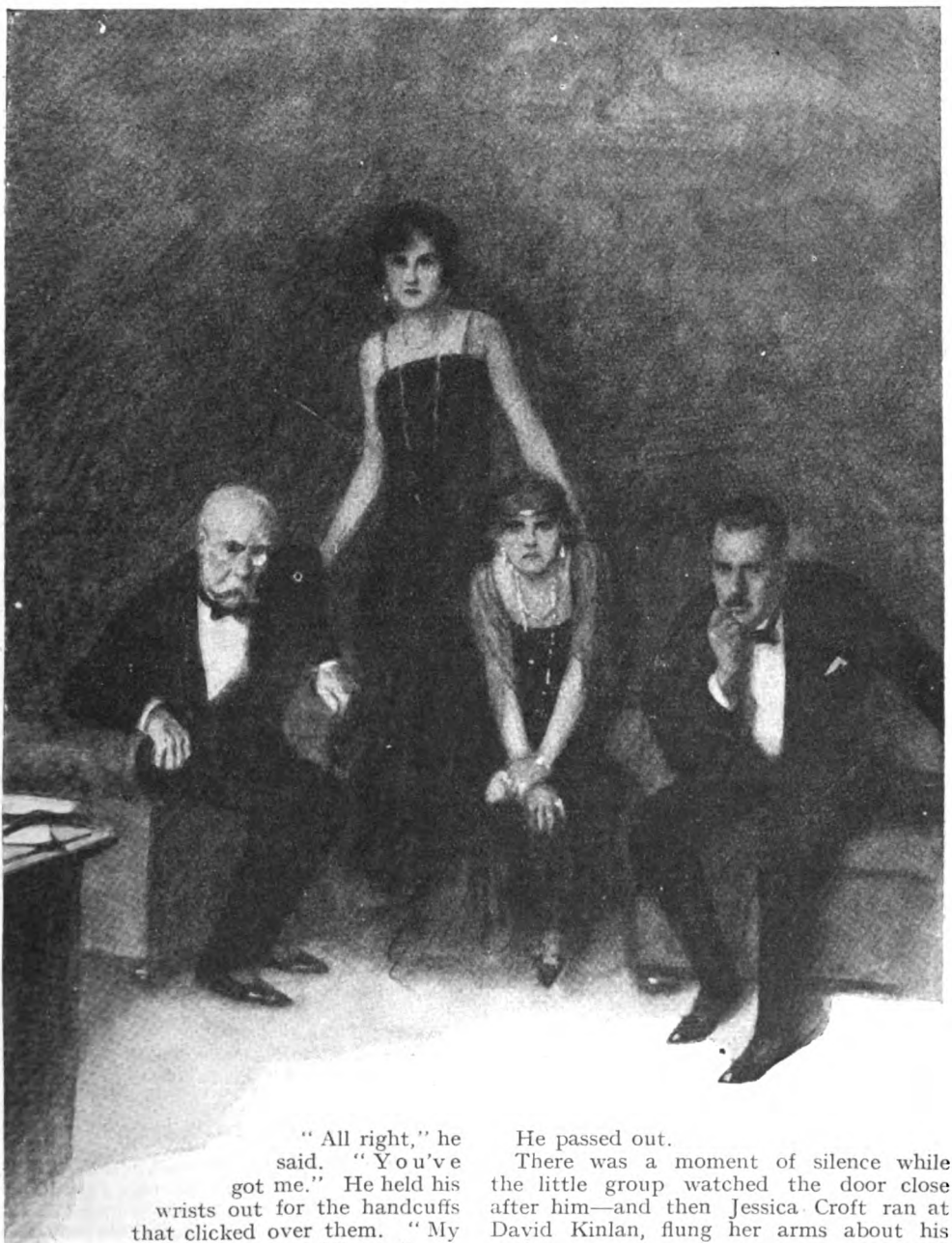
All the lights in the room went up from a master-switch. A man stepped out from behind a bookcase. It was the detective.

"Edgar Barnfield," he said, "I arrest you on a charge of wilful murder."

The big man gasped, writhed in the grip upon his collar, jerked the revolver to his own head, snapped the trigger. Again there was no detonation. He dropped the useless weapon to the floor.



The watchers stared, fascinated, at that illumined desk. The tortured wretch emitted a hoarse cry of maddened hate and despair. He sprang forward, snatched up the revolver——



"All right," he said. "You've got me." He held his wrists out for the handcuffs that clicked over them. "My congratulations, Kinlan," he added, ironically. "If I'd known you were in the house I might have guessed. An excellent performance!" The detective propelled him towards the door, past the sobbing, crumpled-up Mrs. Windrum.

He passed out.

There was a moment of silence while the little group watched the door close after him—and then Jessica Croft ran at David Kinlan, flung her arms about his neck.

"Oh, David, David dear!" she cried, sobbing hysterically. "Thank God—thank God—it wasn't Harry!"

"Harry?"

She recovered herself, in confusion.

"Mr. Armytage," she said, blushing

CHRISTMAS PROBLEMS.

From the Proceedings of the Puzzle Club.

By

HENRY E. DUDENEY.

THE greater Adventures of the Puzzle Club, which, it will be remembered, had once its headquarters in the London Adelphi, have been duly recorded. The skill of the members in solving those curious problems of the "Ambiguous Photograph," the "Cornish Cliff Mystery," the "Runaway Motor-car," the "Mystery of Ravensdene Park," and the "Buried Treasure" is perhaps still in the memory of my readers. I am indebted to Fred Wilson, who tells me that he is busy writing a record of the Proceedings of the Club, for permission to select from a collection he has made some of the lighter puzzles that have been propounded from time to time by his fellow-members. So far as is known the individual authorship of these little posers will be duly credited.

POCKET MONEY.

"WAITER," said Harold Tomkins, as he dropped into the club one morning, "get me a blank cheque, please. I want some cash. Do you fellows know, I have only got this solitary penny on me. When I got to the station this morning I found I was short of cash. I spent just half of what I had on my railway ticket and then bought a penny newspaper. When I got to the terminus I spent half of what I had left and twopence more, on a telegram. Then I spent half of the remainder on a bus and gave threepence to that old matchseller outside the club. Consequently I arrive here with this single penny."

"How much did you start out with?" asked John Macdonald.

"That's just what I want you to tell me," was the reply.

Tom Churton, the bank clerk, said it was quite easy if they worked backwards, which was true, but Tomkins protested that a banker, of all men, ought to be straightforward in his dealings with finance. But they soon solved it.

THE STAIRCASE RACE.

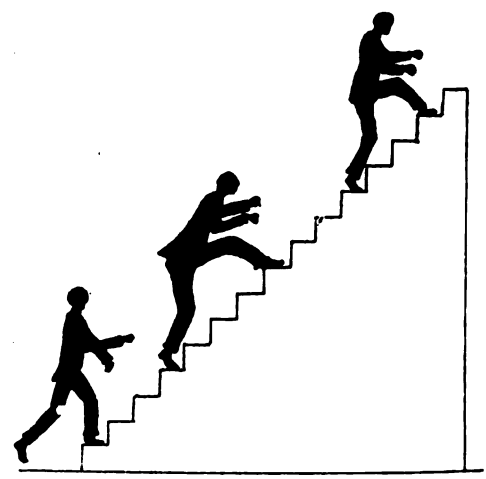
"LOOK here," said Macdonald. "This is a rough sketch I have just made of the finish of a race up a staircase in which three men took part. Ackworth, who is leading, went up three risers at a time, as arranged; Barnden, the second man, went four risers at a time, and Croft, who is last, went five at a time."

"Well," interrupted Tomkins, "if you are going to ask us which won the race I should put my money on Ackworth."

"Undoubtedly he wins. But the point is, How many risers are there in the stairs, counting the top landing as a riser?"

"My dear fellow, why not count them? Let me see. . . . Fifteen."

"Yes," explained Macdonald, "but I have only shown the top of the stairs. There may be scores, or



hundreds, of risers below the line. It was not necessary to draw them, as I only wanted to show the finish. But it is possible to tell from the evidence the fewest possible risers in that staircase. Can you do it?"

This puzzle caused considerable amusement, but they found the key to the answer.

THE COST OF A SUIT.

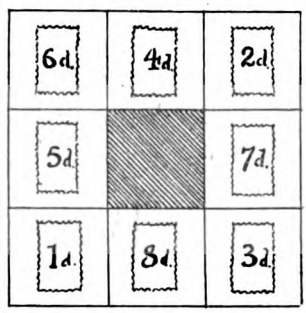
"HULLO, old chap," cried Russell, as Henry Melville, barrister-at-law, came into the club arrayed in a startling new tweed suit, "have you been successful in the card-room lately? No? Then why these fine feathers?"

"Oh, I just dropped into my tailor's the other day," he explained, "and this cloth took my fancy. Here is a little puzzle for you. The coat cost as much as the trousers and vest. The coat and two pairs of trousers would cost £7 17s. 6d. The trousers and two vests would cost £4 10s. Can you tell me the cost of the suit?"

Of course they could, and so, doubtless, could the reader in a very few minutes.

POSTAGE-STAMPS.

HERBERT BAYNES then came forward from a side table where he had been writing and asked to be shown the latest. They gave him the three puzzles we have described and he said he would leave them something fresh of his own invention while he was at work on them. He produced the diagram of which we give a copy and said the puzzle was to affix a different postage-stamp on every square, omitting the central one, so that there should be the same value on each of the four sides.



"You see," he said, "if the stamps are placed as in this diagram, they sum to one shilling on every side. But I want to place stamps so that the sum on the sides shall be, first, the smallest possible, and, secondly, the largest possible."

"Well," said Tomkins, "I should expect that if you increased the value of each of your stamps by fourpence—that is, used the eight stamps from fivepence to a shilling, you would get the largest possible."

"But you are probably not aware," Baynes explained, "that there is no elevenpenny stamp. The stamps available are ½d., 1d., 1½d., 2d., 2½d., 3d., 4d., 5d., 6d., 7d., 8d., 9d., 10d., 1s., 2s. 6d., 5s., 10s., and £1. Now, go ahead."

This gave them some little trouble. Macdonald got the correct answer for the smallest possible, and Churton and Tomkins each get the solution for the largest possible.

AN OLD ENIGMA.

IT was Fred Wilson himself who introduced to the club this old enigma that had been going the rounds for some years without the solution having been found. It is very clever, and is attributed to Lord Thurlow. The solution is quite satisfactory. It is forgotten which member of the club discovered the answer.

Although you boast, thro' ages dark,
Your pedigree from Noah's Ark,
  Painted on parchment nice;
I'm older yet—for I was there—
Than that, because I did appear
  With Eve in Paradise.

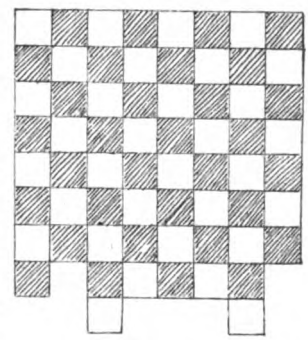
For I was Adam, Adam I,
I was Eve, and Eve was I,
  In spite of wind and weather;
But mark me, Adam was not I,
Neither was Mrs. Adam I,
  Unless we were together!

Suppose, then, Eve and Adam talking,
With all my heart, but if they're walking
  There ends all simile;
Tho' I've a tongue, and often talk,
And tho' I've legs, yet when I walk
  It puts an end to me.

Not such an end but that I've breath;
Therefore to such a kind of death
  I've not the least objection;
For soon I rise again to view,
And, tho' a Christian, yet 'tis true
  I die by resurrection!

MAKING A CHESSBOARD.

PAUL CRUTTENDEN, who was "something in the City," came in later and produced a piece of linoleum of the chequered pattern and shape shown in our illustration.



"How am I," he asked, "to make this into a chessboard by cutting it into only two pieces and fitting them together? Of course, I can cut off those two protruding squares at the bottom and fit them in, but that would be in three pieces. It can really be done in two pieces, though you might scarcely believe it."

The cuts should be made along the lines dividing the squares, and of course the chequered pattern must be retained.

QUEER CHESS.

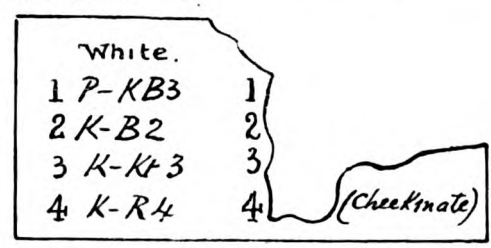
"DEALING with the chessboard," said Macdonald, "reminds me of something I have in my pocket." And he brought out a torn scrap of paper which is here reproduced.

"This," he said, "was the record of a very brief game of chess between two beginners. You will see that only White's moves are preserved, those of Black having been torn away. The puzzle is to restore those missing moves of Black so as to enable him to give that checkmate on the fourth move."

"But what an extraordinary opening for White!" exclaimed Tomkins.

"Yes, the whole game is absurd, but beginners often play absurdly. However, I am told that Black's moves, however ridiculous, are quite legitimate. You would think that those moves are easy to find, but they are not. I have tried every way of play that I could imagine, but I confess my failure. Perhaps some of you will be more successful."

It must be admitted that some days elapsed before one of the members hit on the solution. He was a country member, named Webster, to whom the puzzle had been sent.



THE CLOWN CLOCK.

"YOU fellows should see a clock I have on my study table at home," said Melville. "I call it 'the clown' because of its drollery. You see, I sent it away to be repaired, and the man by a curious blunder put the hands on the wrong pinions, so that the short hour-hand goes twelve times as fast as the long minute-hand, instead of the reverse. Although it is not difficult to tell the time if you remember that the hands are exchanged, it is amusing and bewildering for the very reason that you are so apt to forget the alteration. Force of habit, you know. But I think I shall keep it in its present state as a curiosity.

"Now, it may not have occurred to you that occasionally during the day the clock actually displays the correct time."

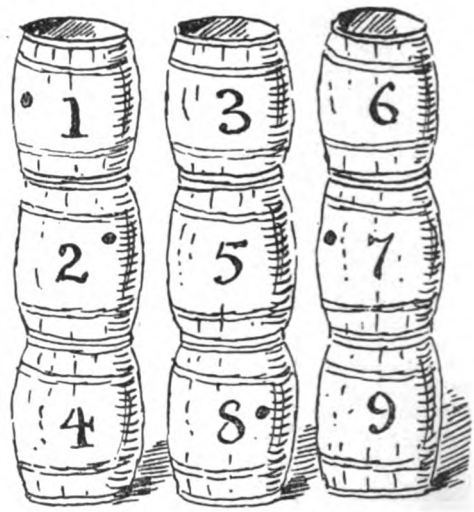
"Do you mean correct if we regard the long hand as the true minute-hand and the short one as the hour-hand?" inquired Melville.

"Precisely. For example, can you tell me when the clock, if set going with both hands at 12 at noon, will show the true time between 3 and 4 o'clock? There is a moment when, since it runs correctly, it will tell the truth between those hours."

Macdonald soon found the solution, but it gave a little trouble to some of the members.

THE NINE BARRELS.

"HERE is a puzzle that kept me amused for some time last night," said Tomkins, and he produced the sketch of nine numbered barrels shown in our illustration. "In how many different ways may these nine barrels be arranged in three tiers of three so that no barrel shall have a smaller number than its own below it or to the right of it? The first correct arrangement that will occur to you is 1 2 3 at the top, then 4 5 6 in the second row, and 7 8 9 at the bottom, and my sketch gives a second arrangement. How many are there altogether?"



After some figuring several of the members of the club produced their answers, but as the numbers they gave were all a little less than those of Tomkins, he suggested the probability that they had dropped some cases in their enumeration. This was found to be so, and in the end they were all agreed as to the correct answer.

(The answers to the above Puzzles, with some new "Perplexities," will be given next month.)

SOLUTIONS TO LAST MONTH'S PERPLEXITIES.

675.—CHESS POSSIBILITY.

PLAY as follows and the given position is reached in seventeen moves:—

WHITE.	BLACK.
1. P—K 4	1. Kt—Q B 3
2. Q—Kt 4	2. Kt—Kt sq.
3. Q—B 4	3. Kt—Q B 3
4. Q—Q 6	4. K P takes Q
5. P—K 5	5. K—K 2
6. P—K 6	6. K—B 3
7. P—K 7	7. Kt—Kt sq.
8. P—K 8 (Q)	8. Kt—K R 3
9. Q—K 4	9. R—Kt sq.
10. Q—Kt 6, ch.	10. R P takes Q
11. P—K R 4	11. K—K 3
12. P—R 5	12. Kt—Kt 5
13. P—R 6	13. K—K 2
14. P—R 7	14. Kt—K B 3
15. P—R 8 (Q)	15. K—K sq.
16. Q—R 5	16. R—R sq.
17. Q—Q sq.	17. Kt—Kt sq.

Sir George Thomas saved a move by queening the rook's pawn first, but had to lose a move at the end to enable the Black king to get home.

676.—A LEGACY PUZZLE.

THE legacy to the first son was £55, to the second son £275, to the third son £385, and to the hospital £605, making £1,320 in all.

677.—DIVIDING THE BOARD.

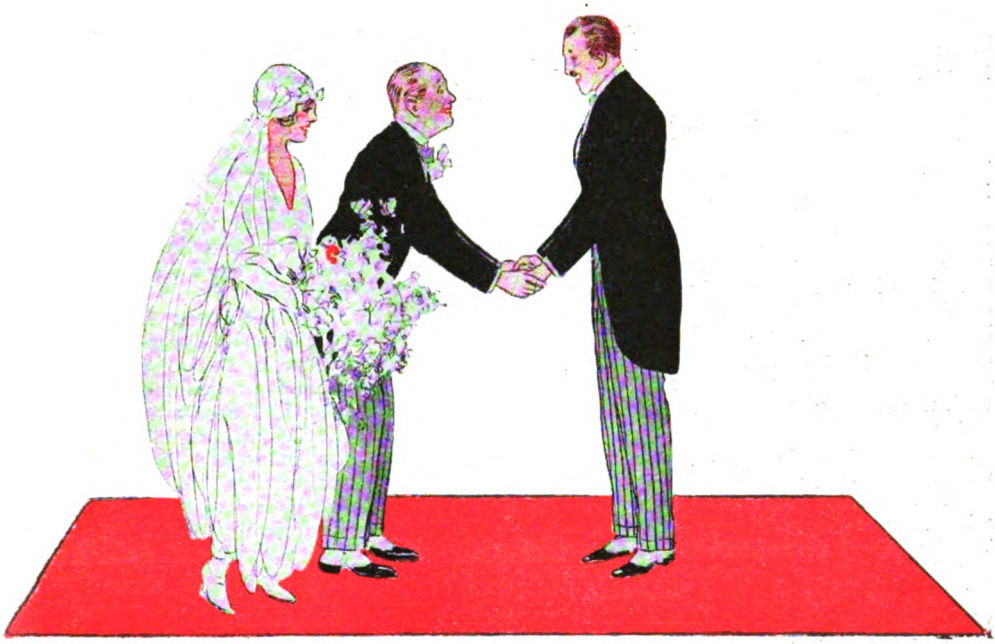
THE distance from the end at which the cut must be made to divide the board into two equal parts is 5·8114 feet nearly.

678.—A CHARADE.

THE word is NOT-ICE.

679.—A QUEER DIVISION.

THIRTEEN is divided into two equal numbers without a fraction in this way: X I I I becomes XI and II (that is, 11, because in ordinary writing the letter I is indistinguishable from the figure 1).



Not Wholly Matrimony

by

THOMAS JOYCE

ILLUSTRATED BY TREYER EVANS

THE wedding reception was in the Grosvenor Hotel. The bride and bridegroom stood beneath a canopy of flowers opposite the door, while above their heads in a gallery the band tuned their fiddles and the trap-drummer yawned. The best man rushed in and out with an important air, for at the moment he had nothing to do, while in the corridor the parents and the half-dozen guests who had come from St. Margaret's in the cars provided for the vestry party fidgeted and made conversation. They also had nothing to do, until it was time to eat.

A tall grave young man with a curly black moustache, wearing his expensive garments as if he knew their cost but did not mind it, moved through the party as if he did not perceive them; bowed to the bridegroom's mother, Mrs. Benton, as if he conferred an honour; and murmured his name to the footman at the door.

"Mr. Marcus Tite."

The bridegroom coloured and smiled broadly. The bride coloured and caught the smile from her husband.

Harry Benton seized his friend's hand between his, and said: "Anne, this is my oldest and dearest friend. He has come all the way from—from——"

"Piccadilly."

Harry laughed loudly and clapped Marcus on the shoulder. "That's just like you, Marcus."

"I hope you will be my friend, too," said Anne, as they shook hands. She was not so gauche as he had expected; he deplored Harry's marriage, especially to a college girl, but he was anxious to like Harry's wife, in order not to lose Harry. It was useless, he considered, to pretend liking to a woman.

"You needn't be afraid, you old rascal," said Harry, delighted to have something to say, something to do. "We are going to keep our friends."

"Oh, yes," said Anne. "I should simply hate to—to——"

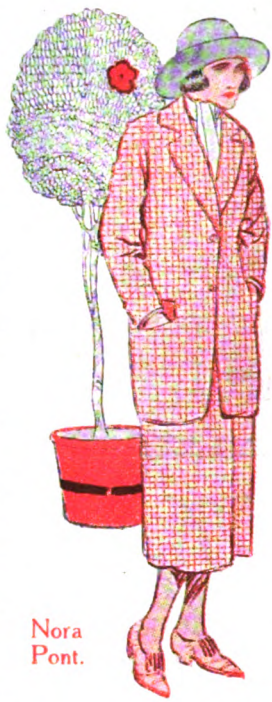
Copyright, 1923, by Thomas Joyce.

"So should I," said Harry. "We want you to come and stay as soon as you can, and as long as you like. You must get to know Anne."

"A very good idea."

"Exactly, you old villain."

"Miss Nora Pont," bawled the footman. "Colonel and Mrs. Stagg. The Honourable Mrs. Bloker. Sir James Jimson. Mr. and Mrs. Evan Evans." Marcus stood aside and gently stroked his tie. Miss Nora Pont, a tall and handsome girl with thick black brows, and a mass of black hair, untidily dressed in a tweed coat and skirt, approached with the stride of a heroine.



Nora Pont.

Anne cried out, joyfully: "Nora darling, I thought you were still in Italy——"

"I should be," said Nora in a baritone. "How do you do? When will this be over?"

"Harry—this is Nora."

"I've heard so much about you, Miss Pont——"

"Don't call me Miss Pont, please. Either Pont or Nora—at college I was Pont and Anne was Stagg—that was sensible."

"If I may, I shall call you Nora."

"I suppose, Anne, I won't be able to see you for at least a week?"

Anne blushed and looked guilty. Harry said, gallantly: "Oh! nonsense, we're going to Bournemouth. Drop in as soon as you like. Yes, really. I shall never forgive myself if this business makes any difference to Anne's friends. Why should it?"

"By this business you mean this marriage?" said Miss Pont, bending her dark brows at him. But here Colonel Stagg, who had been boiling and steaming with impatience behind, drove his wife forward like a ram. Nora glanced over her shoulder and down her splendid nose; then stepped grandly aside.

Anne barely had time to warn Harry that Nora, as a literary lady, was precise in speech, before Mrs. Stagg, a distant cousin by marriage, was squeezing her hand, showing her teeth, and crying like a bird: "De-light-ed. So nice. Everything charming. De-light-ful."

The Colonel grunted "Hullo, Anne! How do, Mr. Benton?" and was heard a moment later asking his wife, in a barrack-square tone, if he could go now.

The footman bawled at ever-increasing speed: "Mistermissusmiss Gregg Missmiths Erarthuraladyeap Revrendandmissus Tomakensie Misterobinson Captanmissus Harrop Misswan Missunt Mist Runt."

Anne and Harry now smiled continuously, repeating "Thankyousomuch. Awflygoodfew, goodfew to come—thankyouawfly for the—so useful. Thanksfrightfly for the—just what we wanted—lovely—topping——"

None of the guests was so rude or stupid as to expect them to know what he or she had given.

All had been received, the best man had earnestly begged everyone to go to the next room for refreshments, whither they had been going as fast as they could from their arrival; the cake had been cut, and portions of cake already cut had been distributed; the band was playing "Kentucky Babe," and the younger guests were beginning to enjoy the dance for which, with the champagne, they had come to the wedding.

Marcus Tite could see no young woman beautiful or smart enough to attract him, and therefore sought one from whom he could expect amusement. He was on his way to accost Mrs. Stagg, a stout lady of fifty, whose merry eye and intelligent snub nose promised good conversation, when he was arrested by the voice of Nora Pont. They had been presented by Anne and Harry severally, who commanded them to admire and like each other.

"What are you waiting for, Mr. Tite?"

"Till they go away, Miss Pont, and not a moment longer."

"Call me Pont or Nora. I can't bear Miss."

"If I may call you Pont."

"That's better, Tite. I suppose you think that Harry has thrown himself away."

"Why?"

"Because Anne has twice his looks and ten times his brains."

"Harry is very good-natured. Perhaps he will not suffer so much as you fear."

"And because you are his friend as I am Anne's. I detest this marriage and so, no doubt, do you."

"Harry and I have been good friends for the last ten years."

"I suppose they have asked you to stay?"

"Yes—but I won't go till I'm asked again."

"Why not?"

"Do you think it wise to stay with an

old friend immediately after his marriage? I am afraid I don't. Marriage breaks friendship. Necessarily. There must be concealments. But after the first two or three years, if one has been discreet in the meanwhile, one can begin a new friendship. Old memories will then be an advantage rather than a cause of jealousy."

"I see you're a cynic."

"I have had experience, and I like to use my experience."

"But conventional. These are conventional ideas. It is absurd to talk of jealousy. Anne has more sense."

She drew a large alphabetical notebook from her pocket, turned to the letter W, and made an entry.

"Your engagement book, Miss Pont—I beg pardon, Pont?"

She looked at him sharply.. Mr. Tite was gravely polite. She smiled and answered: "My notebook. I came here to study a wedding for my new novel, and you gave me an idea. Tell me, Tite, is the white strip which appears above your waistcoat a part of the waistcoat or a separate garment?"

"A separate garment, but also part of the waistcoat. At least, it goes with it."

"That is rather too vague. You see, the Duke in my novel is dressed like you. I have already made a note of your upper dress, and I think I understand the rest from advertisements. No doubt you wear silk throughout. But there are still some serious gaps in my knowledge of details. I do not fully understand that garment. I wonder would you be so really good as to show me a slip without the waistcoat, show me how it works, so to speak?"

Mr. Marcus Tite instantly led her to a corner of the passage outside, and unbuttoned his waistcoat. Miss Pont made a note and a sketch under the letter M, men, and the sub-letter D, dress.

"Thank you, Tite. You're one of the few sensible men I've ever met. We shall be friends. You must come and stay with the Bentons when I'm there. Your objections are ridiculous."

"Tell me, Tite, is the white strip which appears above your waistcoat a part of the waistcoat or a separate garment?"

"When will you be there?"

"I'm going as soon as they return from the honeymoon." Miss Pont sounded this last word like a bishop referring to a moral crime. "And I shall stay for some time. In fact, Anne wants me to stay always."

"Will that be wise—I mean comfortable—for you?"

"I'm not at all sure." She compressed her lips. "However, I mustn't desert poor Anne if she feels that she needs me. I understand that Benton is in the City. He'll be much away. It may be lonely for Anne. Moreover," she smiled at him like a friend, "between ourselves, I want to study a marriage in its first year, and I am anxious to know the inner workings of business. It is almost impossible to write a book nowadays without a business man. Business is the typical occupation of a certain kind of man so prevalent in society that he cannot be ignored by any conscientious writer who has as an ideal the true portrayal of contemporary life. Benton strikes me as a typical business man, self-satisfied, illiterate, narrow in his aims, short in his views—you see, Tite, I treat you as a friend. I am frank with you although you are Benton's friend."

"Quite—quite—thank you very much. Yes, poor Harry is not very clever, and his education did not go far. Eton and Christ Church."

"Exactly. So I heard. And I want to know the type. To you I shall come for racing information. You see, I've heard of you, too. Tell me, what does twenty to one the field mean? Have I got it right?" She opened her book, letter M, sub-letter V, vices.

Here an excited young lady rushed at them to cry as if crying a fire that the bride and bridegroom were about to go away. In the crowd pressing to line the stairs, Marcus lost Miss Pont. This was not much to his regret, for though he loved amusement, he was too indolent to pursue it very far. He had a pleasant memory and a good story.

Nora was soon a well-known character at the S.P. Club, where Marcus loved to

recline in the biggest chair on days when there was no important race-meeting, or when he was too poor to bet, and to talk wisely.

Mr. Tite was a man who not only gave himself sage advice, but followed it. In this way he had acquired and deserved the reputation of wisdom. He knew that more friendships had been destroyed, more families broken, by efforts of the parties to continue in the old relations after marriage has changed all relations, than by open antipathies.

"I must write Harry off for five years," said Marcus, the cynic philosopher. "One year of gaiety, one year of first paternity, one of hypocrisy and hope, one of remorse and despair, one of hypocrisy and resignation. After that he will be an old married man, thinking about other things besides his wife's charms and failings and his own emotions. He will be quietly happy, or at least comfortable, at home; he will envy me sometimes; and he will write down in largest letters on his calendar those days when he will be free to see me by myself, and remind me that he, too, was once a bachelor.

"Five years, then back to my arms."

In spite of sore need, for he had borrowed from everyone else, and was still without credit at his bank, he never went to see Harry. Neither did he ever hear from him. But one evening, three months after the marriage, he met him under the Ritz arcade. Harry looked thin, pale — and even careworn. His forehead was lined. He was startled by his friend's greeting, and shook hands feebly, murmuring "Hullo!"

"How goes it?"

Harry looked at him with instant suspicion and said, "Ar."

"That's good."

Harry roused himself. "I'm all right, splendid. You ought to marry, Marcus. Nothing like it. But, of course, you don't believe a word I say, you old Barmecide."

"You mean Benedict, don't you? And you don't know what you mean by Benedict. Benedict was a man who got married."

"Don't talk to me like Nora, Marcus."

"She's with you, is she?"

"Of course—we're very glad to have her. Anne and I agreed that it was absurd and unnecessary and wrong to let marriage spoil any of our friendships."

"Quite, oh, quite!"

"And it hasn't, I'm glad to say."

"I'm sorry I haven't come to see you—I really should call on Anne. What day would suit you both?"

Harry made no reply. He seemed thoughtful, he frowned; then, looking keenly at Marcus, he said, "Look here, Marcus, I can tell you things I wouldn't tell to anyone else, and you've got me out of all my worst places. I only want a hint. You see, old man, Nora is an awfully good sort and so on, and I'm very glad to make a home for her—you know she doesn't get on with her own people—and, of course, Anne thinks there's no one in the world like her, but——"

"I'm sorry," Marcus hastily interrupted him, "I can't help you there."

"Dash it, Marcus!"

"I can't go against Anne."

"It isn't against Anne. Not really. Not in the long run. You haven't even waited to hear me out."

"I daren't."

Harry lost his temper. He made an impatient gesture. "I'd forgotten your damn silly-clever notions. You're too clever by half, Marcus. Too clever to be a good friend. So long."

He marched away, swinging his stick.

Marcus presented himself at the newly-painted door.

MARCUS did not see him again for five months. Once, against his better judgment but with his heart, he made the long journey to their suburb near Harrow, found their charming little house after an hour's search, and presented himself at the newly-painted door. Through the open drawing-room window he could hear Anne and Nora discussing Tchekov's Letters. Someone in the room above was whistling "Auld Lang Syne" with

variations which could only be Harry's. Harry was not musical.

The smart parlourmaid took his card and said, "I will see if Mrs. Benton is at home."

A moment later Anne's voice in the drawing-room remarked: "What an extraordinary name! Who can it be?"

"Someone for Harry, no doubt."

"I'd better tell Harry—though goodness knows where he is. What a nuisance!"

"If you let him in he'll stay to tea. Perhaps we'll have him on our hands all the evening. Think of the shop they'll talk at dinner!"

"Awful, Nora, isn't it? About stocks and shares and markets and other men."

"It isn't your day at home either. Really, Anne, I should do what you think best."

"Goodness knows where Harry is. Say not at home, Gladys."

Gladys reappeared at the door and said, "Mrs. Benton is not at home."

"But Mr. Benton?"

"Not at home, sir."

Tite should not have asked this question. If Mrs. Benton was not at home, Gladys could not allow him to enter the house on any other pretext and find Mrs. Benton. Morality must be protected. He knew this, but the well-known sound of Harry's "Auld Lang Syne" had touched his heart and spoiled his manners.

He smiled mournfully and walked two dusty miles back to the station. He had been fond of Harry, for he had done a great deal for him. Now he feared that he had lost him for ever. If Harry found out that he had called, and apologized for his denial, so much the worse. Anne would be annoyed by remorse, feel guilty towards him, and dislike him.

Harry did not find out and did not write. But a month later Tite ran into him in Bond Street. Harry was walking or drifting slowly forward with his eyes upon the pavement. His face expressed the utmost dejection of spirit.

Tite ran into him in Bond Street. His face expressed the utmost dejection of spirit.

"Hullo, Harry!"

"Hullo! Why, Marcus, is it you?"

"How goes it? You look better every time I see you. Marriage agrees with you."

Harry smiled gallantly and gave a feeble laugh. "Yes—oh, yes—very nice."

"How's Miss Pont—I beg her pardon—Pont?"

"She's at the twenty-fifth chapter. But you mustn't laugh at Nora."

"Heaven forbid! Your friends are my friends."

Harry looked at him sidelong, then abruptly nodded good-bye and walked on.

So did Marcus, now equally depressed. He was not more selfish than other indolent bachelors of thirty, and less hard-hearted than most sages.

Suddenly his arm was grasped from behind. Harry had run after him.

"Hullo, old man!"

"Come and stay with me. Next week-end."

"I'm afraid that I'm booked for next week-end."

"Marcus, you've always been the best friend in the world to me. You've neglected me lately, but you know I understand why, and forgive you. It's made no difference to my feelings for you. Forgive me my marriage, don't be jealous of poor Anne——"

"You know I like Anne very much. I always——"

"And for God's sake come next week-end. What is your engagement? Some race-meeting or other. Surely it's more important to help me—I mean, to see me——"

Marcus could not resist his pleading voice, his imploring glance. He said, "Very well, I'll come."

"That's like you, Marcus. I knew I had only to ask. The best friend a man ever had."

They parted with emotion.

Marcus, when he had recovered his usual phlegm, remarked to himself: "I seem to be growing stupid in my old age. I'll be lucky if I come out of this with my friend or my self-respect. I can't save both. But may I be kicked for an ass if I let Harry tell me his matrimonial woes, and may I be scragged for a suicidal maniac if I give him a word of advice. My only chance is to be sympathetic with everyone and to lie like a co-respondent."

MARCUS had a flattering reception at Yewtree Lodge. Anne was shocked by the discovery that she had turned Harry's oldest friend from the door. She apologized so much and so often that she became truly grieved. Nora smiled upon him, and asked him if he had read "The Desolation of Desolation," by Ivan Gunavitch.

"No, really, I——"

"I'm surprised. The greatest, truest book of the century. It deals in fundamentals——"

"The Russians are good at that, but somehow they depress me."

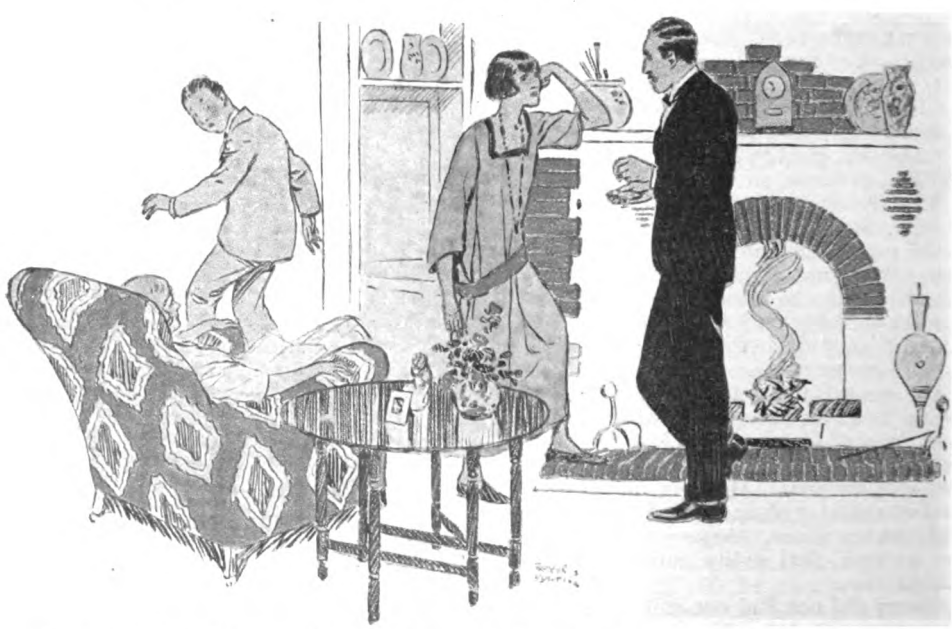
"I'm disappointed. Are you afraid, too, of searching things to the bottom? Surely, Tite, you are not one of the moral poltroons who turn their eyes from human depravity in order to preserve what they call their self-respect?" She glanced at Harry, who blushed like a girl and quietly vanished from the room, while Tite was explaining that though, like Pont herself, he had no self-respect whatever, he did not like monotony in art. He found in the Russians a certain monotony.

"I see you have not read them," said Nora, and ignored him for the rest of the evening. So also she ignored Harry. She talked only with Anne, upon the ethics of Rabindranath Tagore as contrasted with the idealism of Zola.

At nine the ladies withdrew to Nora's room. Anne apologized to her guest so prettily that he at once forgave her. "You see, Mr. Tite, I'm wanted; I'm really a kind of secretary. And Nora has come to the most important chapter. I know you understand. Please forgive me, and please be good to Harry. He'll love to have you to himself."

As soon as the door closed, Harry exploded. It was useless for Marcus to cry: "No—no—old man—it isn't fair. You mustn't." He might as well have remonstrated with a firework.

"I daren't even talk to Anne at my own table," Harry cried, standing over Marcus and waving his hands at him. "I can see her criticizing me. I mayn't be clever in their way, but Anne didn't think me a fool till Nora took me to pieces. Why, anybody can be made to look a fool if you take him to pieces, anyone on earth. It's not fair. Everybody knows it isn't fair. It's not done, and that's why it isn't done. And things are getting worse. Nora used to be

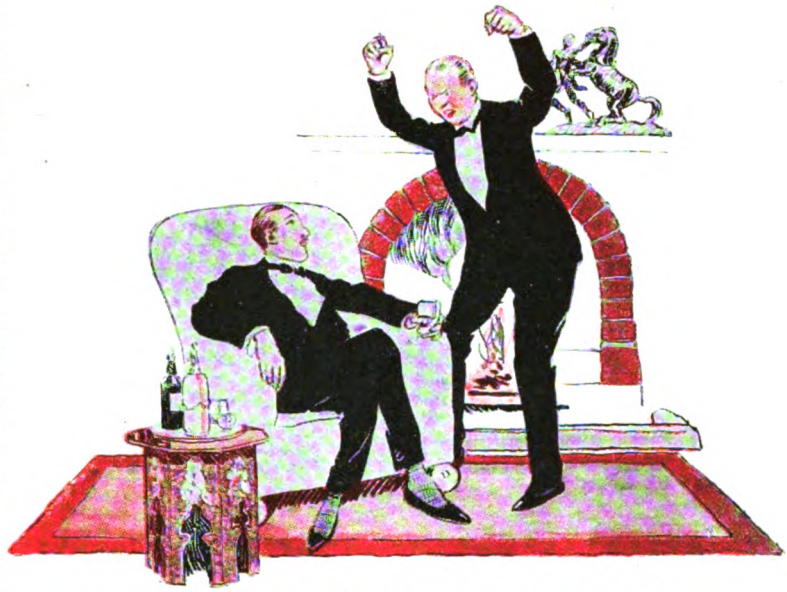


She glanced at Harry, who blushed like a girl and quietly vanished from the room.

fairly polite, but now she doesn't take the trouble. Anne used to stand up for me, but now she doesn't take the trouble either."

Harry at twenty-nine still looked like a schoolboy with his round face and blue eyes. Now, when confession increased his misery, it was touching as a child's. Marcus could not resist sympathy and agreed that Nora was intolerable.

"She doesn't mind being intolerable," cried Harry.



"I daren't even talk to Anne at my own table."

"No, I dare say she likes the sensation. Intellectuals of her sort enjoy nothing more. You see, Harry, ordinary people to Nora are like small animals; nice ones like puppies or kittens, and nasty ones like rats and weasels."

"And I'm a weasel——"

"I hope only a puppy, Harry. Yes, I should think just a puppy." He added thoughtfully, "I've met people like Nora before. She has the three best reasons for self-satisfaction—good looks, height, and a good brain, and she's escaped the greatest drawback, a sense of humour."

"For God's sake, Marcus, don't talk like a professor. I've had enough of it. I want to know how it's going to end."

"When she goes away, or perhaps when you go away."

"It will be me. Anne will never turn her out. It's hard enough to turn anyone out. You can't go to a guest and say: 'Please leave us. You've stayed long enough.' The longer she stays the harder it is. And it's impossible to turn Nora out because Anne is delighted to have her and wants her to stay for ever. She doesn't seem to understand that Nora's ruining our happiness, that she can't have it both ways. I wanted her to keep her friends, but surely I should come first. Or what did she marry me for? What is marriage for? Don't married people expect to make a few little sacrifices?"

"Of course—and their friends."

"Of course—but look at the way I'm stuck—it isn't like being married at all."

"Certainly it's not wholly matrimony."

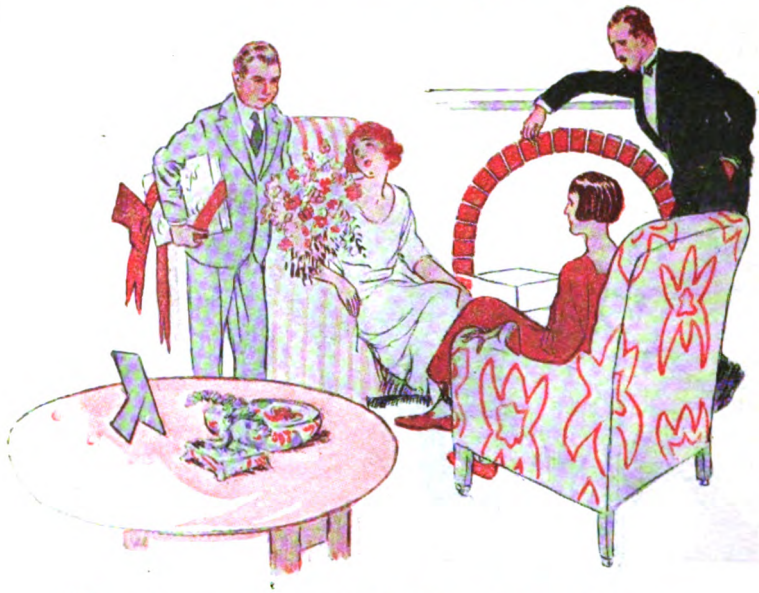
"What d'you mean? Don't smile, Marcus, or I'll get mad. It may be a joke from outside, but it's hell for me, and I can't stand any more. I'm beginning to have rows with Anne now. We had a row last night because I whistled in my dressing-room and Nora lost an adjective on the stairs—I know adjectives are tricky to catch, but why doesn't she plug her ears? Why should Anne call me a Philistine and a brute for suggesting that Nora should wear an aero cap when she's chasing adjectives? I was only joking, and goodness knows it's hard enough to joke. Marcus, if you can tell me how to get Nora out of the house, I'll give you anything you like. Of course, you don't want things from me, and we can't be better friends. I can't be fonder of you or more grateful to you. But if you asked me for everything I've got, I'd give it and think myself a good man of business. Life isn't worth living for me without Anne, and I'm losing her. She's learning to think me a fool—a puppy if you like—an ignorant ass who makes money in the City by some kind of low trickery and doesn't know the difference between Kickoff and Dustywesky."

"Who are they?"

"Oh, never mind 'em, Marcus. Tell me—what am I to do?"

"I don't really see what you can do."

"You mean you won't see. Why have you changed like this, Marcus? Why do you



The next evening he appeared with a chocolate-box in one hand and a huge bouquet in the other.

treat me like a stranger? I couldn't have believed it of you a year ago. There was no one in the world I trusted so much. If anyone had told me that you would run away from my troubles I would have laughed at him or kicked him. What is it? Marcus—what's wrong with you?"

"I want to keep you, Harry, and as I like Anne, and Anne, I believe, is not my enemy——"

"She isn't—she likes you very much."

"But if I take sides in this——"

"So that's it," cried Harry in disgust. "You're being clever. You're too clever to be a good friend. You're afraid to help me out of the damnedest hole I ever was in to save your own skin. Is that keeping me? I tell you, Marcus, there's a cleverness better than yours. That's good-nature."

Marcus smiled mournfully and said: "Yes, I'm a fool or I shouldn't be here."

"For God's sake, Marcus—trust me. Give me credit for some steadiness—a will of my own—gratitude that lasts—and help me. Try, at least. I wouldn't ask you if I wasn't completely stuck—you know I'm not very inventive—help me or go to blazes!"

"The only thing I can think of——"

"Yes—yes—spit it out."

"I can't take any responsibility."

"Heavens no, whatever happens. How could I blame you?"

"You'll think it a rotten idea."

"No, no—I swear I won't."

"Make love to her."

"Make love to her! Good God, she knows I love her—I'm making love all the time. And she only looks down her nose and calls me a funny boy. She's beginning to have the same opinion of love as Nora—all the same opinions as Nora——"

"I don't mean to Anne. I mean to Nora. You must make love to Nora."

Harry uttered a short curse and told his friend Marcus not to be funny.

"I'm not being funny. I'm in earnest."

"What—that old stale trick! It might come out of one of Nora's books—or melodrama."

"It's wonderful how like life is to books and melodrama. But perhaps you have a better suggestion."

"You know I haven't. But, Marcus, be serious. You know that's a mad idea."

"It seems to me a very good one. It's simple. It's old. It's based on the experience of five or six thousand years."

"But how the devil can I make love to a woman like that? I shouldn't know how to begin."

"Get her a box of chocolates and flowers for her room."

"Chocolates—for that steel-plated harridan?"

"I only say, try it. It can't do any harm. After all, the important thing is not the effect on Nora, but on Anne."

"You're not married, Marcus. A husband can't play tricks like that."

"Very well. If you can think of anything better——"

Harry said "Damn," and went out.

THE next evening at dinner-time he appeared five minutes late with a chocolate-box in one hand and a huge bouquet in the other. Marcus, Nora, and Anne gazed at him. He was extremely red. He approached Nora and said in a quavering voice: "Ha! ha! Nora—I—ah—happened to see some—ah—chocolates in a shop—ah

—in the—ah. I thought—a present, you know. A non—birthday present—ha! ha! And, oh, yes—a few flowers for your room! I say, Anne, isn't it time for dinner?"

Nora allowed him to thrust the chocolates and the flowers into her hand; and then, recovering herself, thanked him with cold politeness and placed his gifts on the mantelpiece.

At dinner she conversed with Anne upon the psychology of Dostoievsky. Anne gazed at her with proud devotion. So did Harry when he had fortified himself with three courses and several drinks.

"Really, Nora—ha! ha! you're a—a marvel!" he cried.

They all gazed at him, and he blushed to the roots of his hair. Nora smiled faintly, as at the gambols of an infant, and was about to continue her analysis of "The Brothers Karamazov," when he jumped up, took a rose from a bowl before them, and approached her with the step of a nervous panther.

"What are you doing, Harry?" said Anne, alarmed.

"I was—ha! ha!—I just wondered how Nora would look with this in her hair. The Spanish style, you know—just to please me, Nora. You are rather Spanish, aren't you?"

"Thank you—I'd rather not. As I was saying, Anne——"

Harry, though visibly trembling, thrust the stem of the rose into her hair and returned to his seat, whence he gazed at the effect with an air of lunatic joy. Nora continued her speech as if she were alone with Anne, who, pale with astonishment and shame, pretended to listen, while she watched her crazy husband out of the corner of her eye.

After dinner Marcus took Harry out to play billiards at the local club—that is, out of further mischief. Harry was glad to escape. He dared not face his wife.

But he had to meet her that night. Husbands can never avoid an explanation; and so there are only two kinds of husbands, diplomats and brutes. Anne was more astonished than angry.

"But what on earth possessed you, Harry—it wasn't the whisky, was it? Nora is sure it was the whisky, and perhaps it is best that she should——"

"Why shouldn't I like Nora, too?"

"Of course you do, dear. But it's not the way to show it—insulting her and interrupting her."

"Good heavens, Anne! it isn't an insult to a pretty girl."

"Darling, please don't be so absurd. She isn't a pretty girl."

"She's a very pretty girl with those dark eyes and that black hair—she's a stunning girl. I thought you admired her, too."

"Of course I do. She's beautiful—but not a pretty girl. As if you were talking of someone on the stage!"

"You're jealous, Anne."

"Really, Harry, I believe you have been drinking. I don't know what Mr. Tite thought of you. I've tried to make Nora think that you were only trying to pay her a kind of compliment."

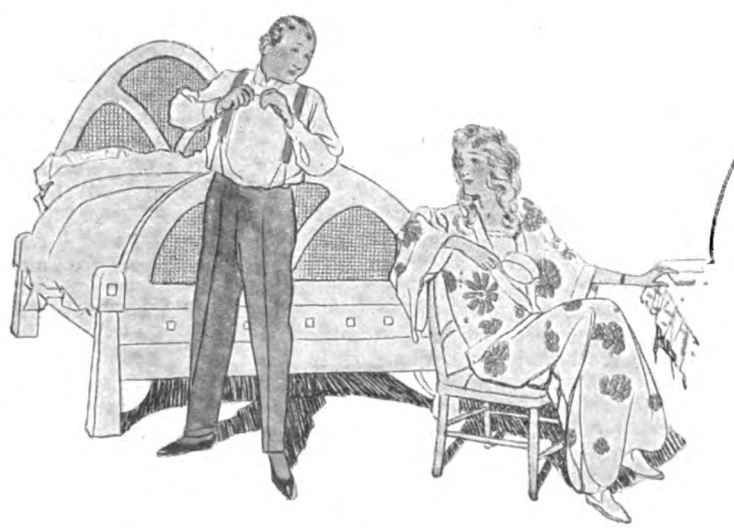
"So I was. What do you think?"

"Then you did it very badly, and I'm not surprised that she was annoyed. I'm sorry, dear; but she talked of going away, and I've been feeling rather miserable."

"Good Lord, Anne, talked of going away!"

"Of course, she was very nice about it. She just hinted—her nerves are rather bad just now, poor darling, because she's having so much trouble with Aurelia."

Aurelia was Nora's heroine. She was always a handful, since she combined the intellect of Emanuel Kant with the beauty of Cleopatra and the moral energy of



"You're jealous, Anne."
"Really, Harry, I believe you have been drinking."

Savonarola. Her conversation had to be at once charming, original, elevating, and yet not more polysyllabic than that of other young ladies. She frequently gave Nora trouble.

"We must put that all right," said Harry firmly. "We can't afford to lose Nora."

MARCUS left the next morning at the end of his week-end visit; Harry travelled to town with him, on the way to the office, and at parting pressed his hand and murmured: "It's working. You've saved me. God bless you, old man!" They were both deeply moved.

Marcus was no less delighted than Harry by the renewal of their friendship, but he prudently resolved not to see him too often for the first weeks; and not at all during the present crisis at Yewtree Lodge. But in this he had forgotten Harry, who 'phoned

Harry took them to hear—

him at the club within half an hour of their parting at the station, and asked him to lunch.

Before long came the inevitable topic: "By the way, I wanted to ask you about——"

"About Nora. My dear man, I advised you—I took no responsibility."

"Oh! it's all right. I'm behaving like a madman, and Nora threatens to go three or four times a day. The only trouble is that she doesn't go. And meanwhile Anne is getting frightened. She can't understand my conduct. I wish you'd thought of that, Marcus. I hate upsetting Anne."

"I told you that I took no——"

"Oh—of course. Good Lord, yes! It's not your funeral. Only I was just wondering how to hurry things up——"

"If I were someone else and you were a stranger to me, I should say——"

"Yes, yes—what would you say?"

"You want to get Nora out of it?"

"Yes, yes, yes! Spit it out!"

"At all costs?"

"Anything on earth."

"Kiss her."

"What! Oh, come——"

"I'm serious, Harry. Kiss her in a cab or at least in the twilight—romantically."

Marcus, slightly ruffled by his friend's amusement, added with severity: "You should not treat ridiculous ideas as jokes

—George Robey.

merely because they are ridiculous That's a mark of the dull mind."

Harry burst out laughing and slapped Marcus on the back.

"Laugh as much as you like," said Marcus, "but in a serious situation I give serious advice, even at the risk of seeming funny. I say, kiss her, and if possible kiss her at a time and place naturally exciting, of emotion, such as twilight in a cab, or dawn in an opera-box."

But Harry was suddenly grave. He said, coldly: "All the same, it isn't a joke—not for me. It's easy for you to laugh and make fun——"

Marcus sighed and departed.

HARRY asked Nora and Anne to Covent Garden to see the "Rheingold," but Nora did not care for Wagner. He was too crude.

"I'm sure you'd like the 'Rheingold,'" Harry assured her. "There's a marvellous scene where the sun rises——"

But Nora did not care for realistic scenery on the stage. It was bad enough in nature, which too often reminded one of picture postcards.

She would not go, and neither would

Anne, who remarked thoughtfully that, from some points of view, Wagner was a little crude.

Harry took them to hear George Robey, as Nora wished to study contemporary humour.

Nora sat throughout with the expression of a female Rhadamanthus judging the dead; Anne giggled twice and blushed for shame. Neither would eat Harry's chocolates.

In the intervals Nora made notes. She asked Harry what he had laughed at and why. He did his best to explain.

Harry had hired a closed car. He was a polite man, even a polite husband, but when they were entering the car, to Anne's astonishment, he jumped in before her and placed himself next Nora on the back seat. She did not reprove him only because she was beginning to be afraid of him. They turned out of the Edgware Road into the lanes near Harrow. It was dark in the car. Suddenly Nora uttered a sharp exclamation; then a cry: "How dare you!"

"Nora!" cried Anne.

"Stop—I won't go on. I won't sit beside him. It's too bad. It's abominable."

"Nora, dear," Harry implored, "I didn't think you'd mind—and you might consider Anne."

Anne, trembling with fright, tapped wildly on the front window. The car drew up. The door was opened and Nora descended in majestic rage.

"What is it? What is it?" cried Anne.

"I can't tell you. Nothing could persuade me to tell you. But I won't drive another yard with him. And we certainly can't stay in the same house any longer."

Harry begged, Anne implored, without effect. At last Harry offered to walk home. "I deserve it. But really, Nora, I do think you're a little to blame."

"What is it, though? What is it all about?" poor Anne asked.

"Never mind, dear. I suppose you'll know soon enough. I suppose this will smash us up; but I swear I didn't mean anything wrong. I just lost my head."

"Perhaps," said Anne, coldly, "we had better drive on, Nora."

They drove on. Harry, exulting like a hero who has passed with glory through a dreadful ordeal, turned up his coat-collar and marched gaily through the mud. He had three miles to go, and it was beginning to rain, but as he hopped over the puddles he whistled with many flourishes "Auld Lang Syne," "God Save the King," and the "Old Hundredth," the only three tunes of which he was a confident performer.

He was whistling even three-quarters of an hour later when, wet through and footsore, he tramped to his door. But he entered in discreet silence, preparing already a sympathetic countenance.

He was surprised to find the housemaid, half dressed and much flustered, strapping a trunk in the hall.

"Hullo, Gladys. You're very late."

"It's Miss Pont's, sir. It's to be called for early, and she said it was to be ready to-night."

"Let me help you. Where is Miss Pont?"

"She went back in the car, sir. She's gone to the hotel on the label, sir."

Gladys was still more flustered. Harry sent her to bed, and himself strapped the trunk. Then he lifted up his draggled coat-tails, danced silently round the hall, and, stopping before a mirror, grinned, wagged a finger at himself, and said:—

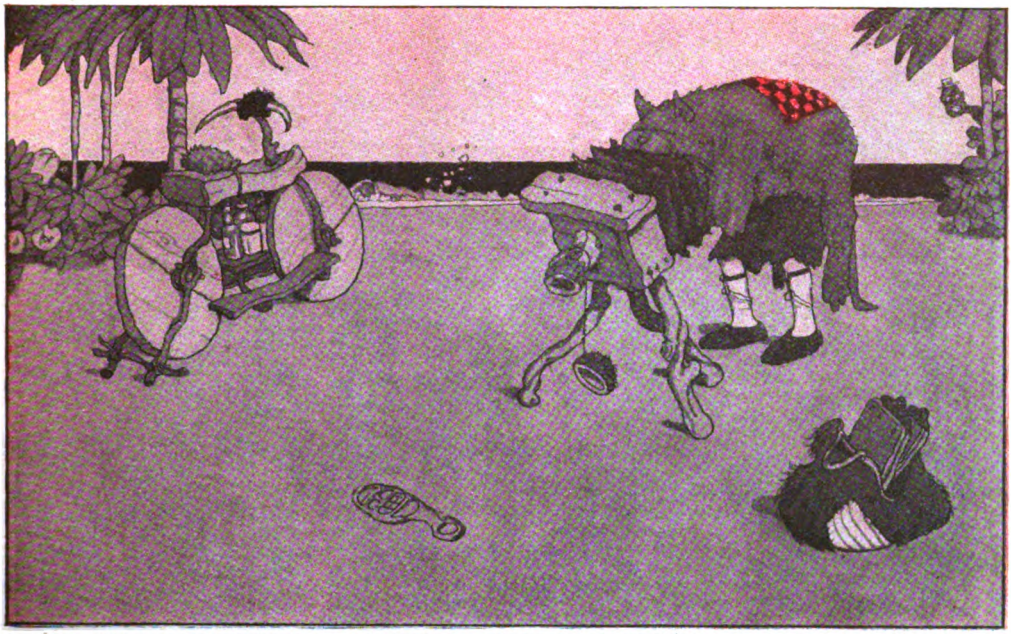
"You Seymour Hicks, you!"

Heath Robinson Crusoe

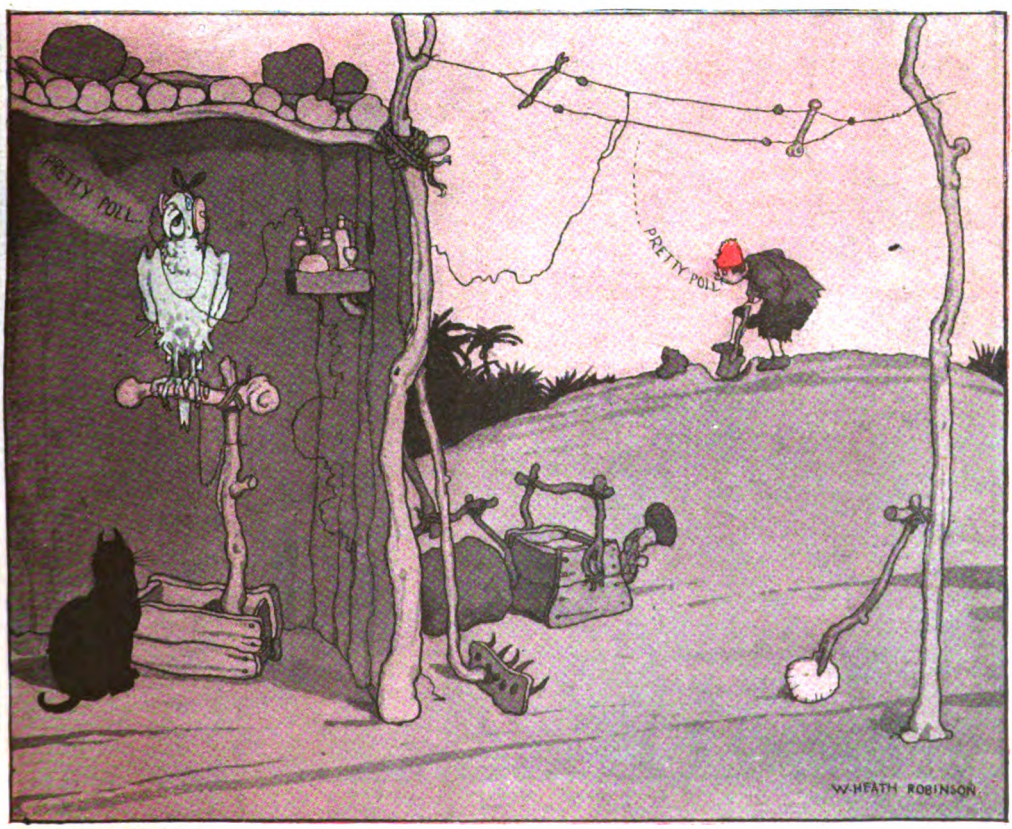
Has the whimsical imagination of W. Heath Robinson ever evolved anything more humorous than these illustrations of "Robinson Crusoe" up-to-date?

HIS AEROPLANE.

"AND, IN A WORD, I GOT ALL THIS SAFE ON SHORE ALSO."



"I WAS EXCEEDINGLY SURPRISED WITH THE PRINT OF A MAN'S FOOT."

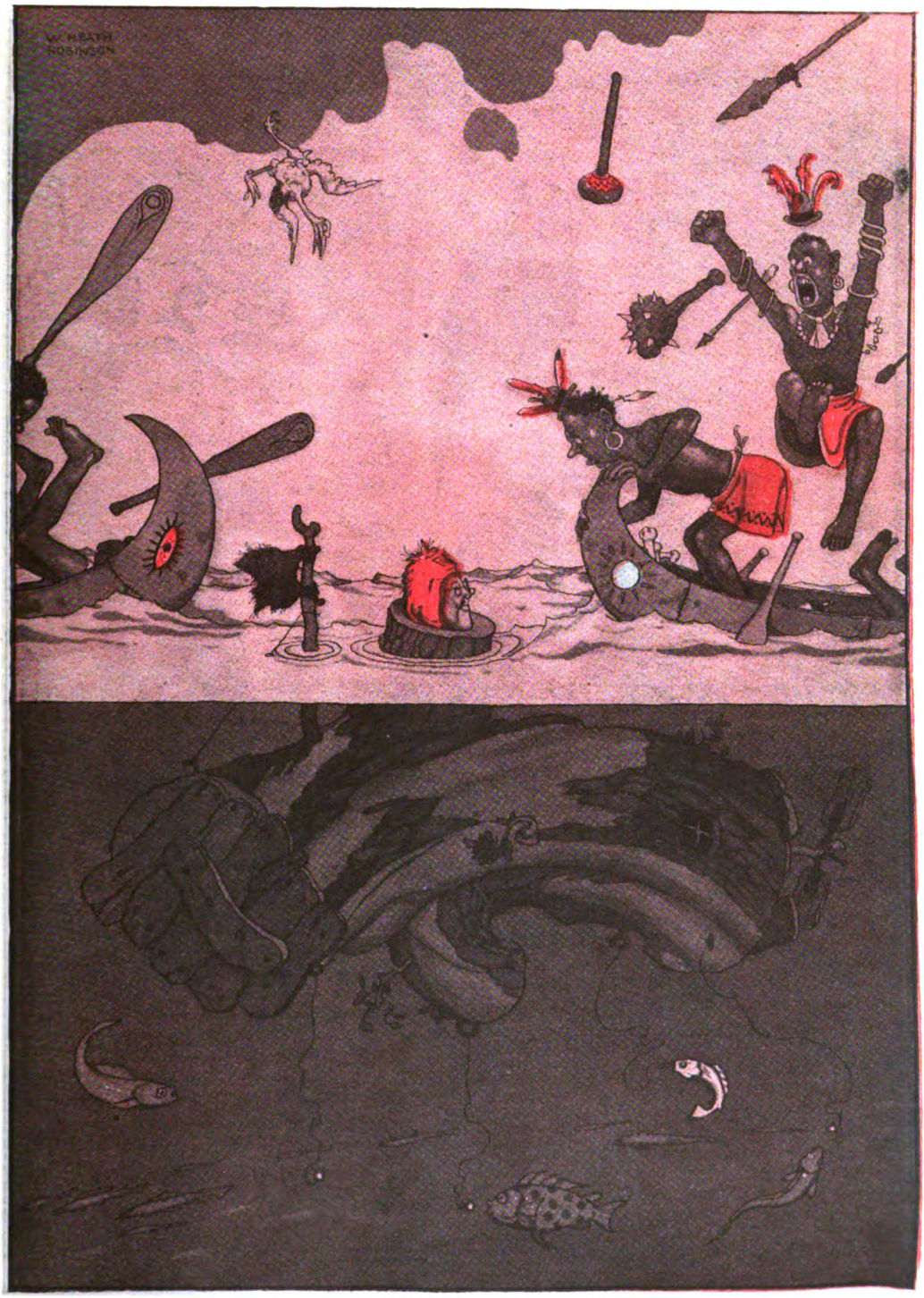


HIS WIRELESS.

"HOWEVER, AT LAST I TAUGHT HIM TO SPEAK."

HIS HOME LIFE.

"IT WAS NOW THAT I BEGAN SENSIBLY TO FEEL HOW MUCH MORE HAPPY THIS LIFE I NOW LED WAS."



HIS SUBMARINE.

"AND THUS I EVERY NOW AND THEN TOOK A LITTLE VOYAGE."

HIS RECREATION.

"I BEGAN NOW TO HAVE SOME USE FOR MY TONGUE AGAIN."

Winning All the Time!

He's winning—because he has the will to win!

His eye is quick to see an opening, his limbs are quick to seize it and follow it through, his grit and pluck prevail to carry him on to triumph.

In everyday life, as on the field of play, he misses no chance; and, once it comes, he goes "all out" until the goal is reached.

The will to win, which in every walk of life is so much more valuable than either cleverness or brute power, depends largely on the general health of the body. If you let yourself get run down through lack of fresh air and exercise, unwise diet, worry, overwork and all the other disadvantages of the average business man's life, your whole personality suffers. In particular your determination and will-power become weakened. You cannot "last."

That's where Kruschen comes in—to counteract the ill effects of a city life and keep you physically and mentally fit all the year round.

Every day your body calls out for six vital salts that are necessary for its proper health. Because of the artificial life you lead, your body is unable to extract them from your food. Kruschen Salts (as the analysis on every bottle shows) are just those six salts, blended in Nature's own proportion. To maintain your inner harmony, you need them every day. Not much—just as much as will lie on a sixpence. *It's the little daily dose that does it!*

Gently but surely Kruschen cleanses your body of all the clogging waste matter that has been producing tiredness, depression, headaches—possibly rheumatism and worse. Your blood is refreshed, your mind invigorated, your whole being cheered and heartened. You feel master of your fate, captain of your soul. *And you're winning all the time.*

Don't waste what should be the most profitable years of your life. Get a 1s. 9d. bottle of Kruschen at your chemist's *now* and start the habit of health to-morrow.

That "Kruschen Feeling!"

Kruschen Salts

Tasteless in Tea

Good Health for a Farthing a Day

A 1/9 bottle of Kruschen Salts contains 96 doses—enough for three months—which means good health for less than a farthing a day. The dose prescribed for daily use is "as much as will lie on a sixpence," taken in the breakfast cup of tea. Every Chemist sells Kruschen. Get a 1/9 bottle to-day and start to-morrow.

GECOPHONE

BRITAIN'S BEST BROADCASTING SET

The latest Xmas Gift Idea

No better Xmas Gift can be conceived than Britain's most popular Wireless Set. Ensures reception at its best, regularly. Vocal and Instrumental Music, Speeches, News, Weather Reports—every broadcasted item—may be received with wonderful clarity, whether you live in a remote part of the country or close to any broadcasting station.

An Eniskillen user writes:—"I can get ALL Broadcasting Stations in Great Britain on your 2-Valve Gecophone Set at Eniskillen. There is nothing freakish about these results, as I can rely on getting a satisfactory show every night."—Colin T. Methuen, Eniskillen.

GECOPHONE

Two-Valve Set, complete with valves, batteries and one set double head-phones. Approximate range (with Standard P.O. Aerial) 100 miles.

Price - - **£20 0 0**
Plus B.B.C. Tariff, **15/-**

GECOPHONE

Crystal Set No. 2, complete with one set double head-phones. Approximate range (with Standard P.O. Aerial) 30 miles.

Price - - **£7 10 0**
Plus B.B.C. Tariff, **1/-**

GECOPHONE

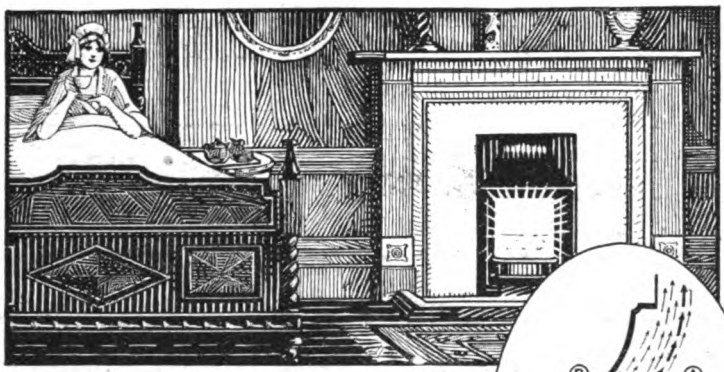
Crystal Set No. 1, complete with one set double head-phones. Approximate range (with Standard P.O. Aerial) 25 miles.

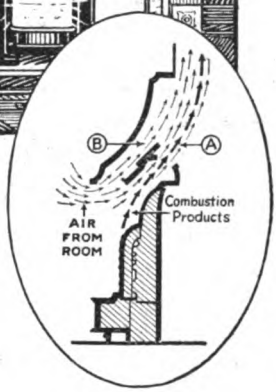
Price - - **£4 10 0**
Plus B.B.C. Tariff, **1/-**

Sold by Principal Wireless Dealers

Sole Selling Agents for the Music Trades in Great Britain and Ireland:
Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd., 102-108, Clerkenwell Rd., London, E.C.1

Manufacturers and Wholesale only:
The General Electric Co., Ltd. Head Office: Magnet House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2





Comfort on a Cold Morning

WHAT a difference a gas grate makes to the comfort of your bedroom! A Radiation Gas Grate not only gives instant warmth, it also ensures *perfect ventilation.*

This is caused by the "Injector-Ventilator," an exclusive Radiation patent.

The diagram above shows two openings under the canopy leading to the flue. The lower or "Injector" opening carries away all the combustion products (A....heavy arrows). These ascending products cause—by Injector action—a current of air (B....light arrows) to pass through the upper, or "Ventilating" opening. Thus the volume of air in the room is entirely changed six times each hour, maintaining healthy ventilation without draughts, and not unduly heating the air of the room.

Radiation Gas Grates

with the patent "Injector-Ventilator"

Radiation Gas Grates, in a pleasing variety of designs and colours, can be seen at your local Gas Showrooms. Also at Ironmongers and Stores; or any of the Radiation firms named below.

Whilst inspecting the Radiation Gas Grates, ask to be shown the "New World" Cooker. The burner of this cooker reduces the cost of gas-cooking to pre-war level, whilst the "Regulo" Automatic Oven Heat Controller maintains the correct oven temperature for the cooking in hand, so that watching and attention are unnecessary. Free illustrated booklets of Radiation Gas Grates and the "New World" Cooker will be forwarded on request by any of the Radiation firms named opposite. These six firms are the largest Gas Appliance Manufacturers in the world.

"New World" Self-Controlled Cooker

ARDEN HILL & CO.,
21 Queen Victoria Street, E.C. 4

THE DAVIS GAS STOVE CO., LTD., 60 Oxford Street, W. 1

FLETCHER, RUSSELL & CO., LTD., 15 Fisher Street, Southampton Row, W.C. 1

THE RICHMOND GAS STOVE & METER CO., LTD., 164 Queen Victoria Street, E.C. 4

WILSONS & MATHIESONS, LTD., 76 Queen Street, E.C. 4

JOHN WRIGHT & CO., 21 Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C. 4

13

Tobacco & Cigarettes

Sold by all dealers in Tobacco.
Packed only in packets and tins.

P 988 Issued by The Imperial Tobacco Co. (of Great Britain and Ireland), Ltd.

Furniture of Economy, Comfort and Wear

CASH OR EASY PAYMENTS—Free and Safe Delivery

by Motor Traction, or Rail to nearest Railway Station.

A SUITE WHICH WILL GIVE SATISFACTION IN WEAR.

If not approved of, can be returned at our expense, and any money paid will be refunded in full.

THE WORTHING SUITE

of Settee, one end adjustable, and two Divan Easy Chairs. All pieces are of comfortable size — our standard reliable upholstery work, interior coppered steel springs—British Web — superior new canvas — fibre and wool — British Castors, patent push-in Castors — Loose Down Cushions, covered in Tapestry or Corded Velvet, in pretty shades of Greys, Browns, Reds, Greens or Golds.

3-Piece Suite (Settee and 2 Easy Chairs).

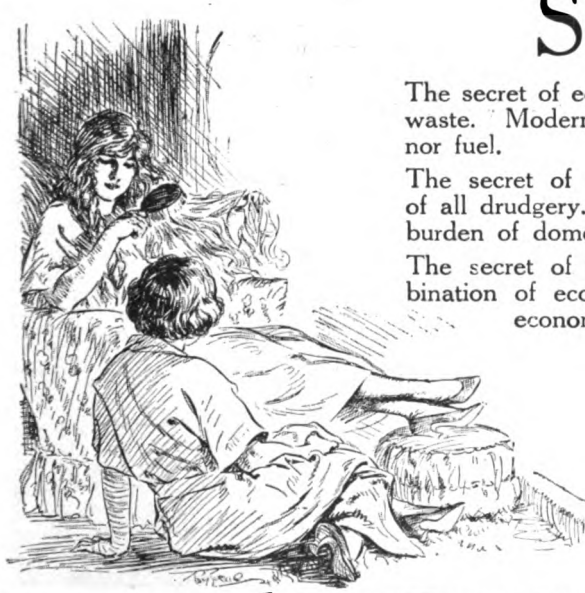
23 guineas—£2 down, 12/6 monthly.
Cash Price - - £21 15 0

FREE Our Fully Illustrated Catalogue, together with Terms, etc. A perusal of this will save you Pounds in Furnishing.

GLOBE Furnishing Co. J. R. GRANT, Proprietor. (Dept. E), **Pembroke Place LIVERPOOL.**

BCGA *United for Service*

Secrets



The secret of economy is the avoidance of all waste. Modern gas fires waste neither time nor fuel.

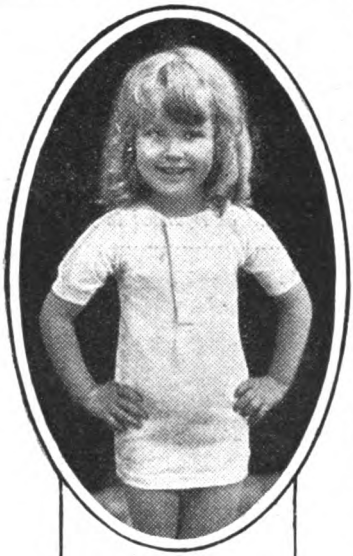
The secret of contentment is the avoidance of all drudgery. Modern gas fires lighten the burden of domestic work.

The secret of the happy home is the combination of economy and comfort — gas fire economy, gas fire comfort.

The B.C.G.A. ..... representing the British Gas Industry, is at the service of the public for advice and help on any subject, large or small, connected with the economical and efficient use of gas in home, office or factory. . . . . A letter to the Secretary will receive prompt attention free of charge or obligation.

Leaflet No. A 14 free on application

THE BRITISH COMMERCIAL GAS ASSOCIATION
30, GROSVENOR GARDENS, WESTMINSTER, S.W.1.



Underwear that every Mother should know . . . . . and that she and her children should wear

Mothers have only to *see* "Alpine" Underwear to be charmed with the shapeliness and daintiness of both Ladies' and Children's garments. Most Drapers already stock "Alpine"—and every Draper can get it for you.

Nearly 40 years ago the first "Alpine" garment was made. From the very first the silky-soft comfort, the cosy warmth of the pure, new wool fabric, and the prideful, painstaking making have won the appreciation and *complete confidence* of all who come to know "Alpine" Underwear.

Ask to see "Alpine" Underwear—with the "Alpine" Dog's Head on every garment

Examine the Ladies' garments and see, for yourself, the fine, regular weave of the 2-thread all-wool yarn, ***the graceful shape***, the perfect making . . . and the double splicing which strengthens the parts specially subject to hard wear. Then examine the little garments made for Children and you will find the same worthiness . . . just the same care—and pride—taken, ***in every little detail.***

Wear "Alpine" always.

There is an "Alpine" Fabric correct-to-wear for each season of the year . . . so, remember to ask for "Alpine" *whenever* you are buying Underwear.

"Alpine" for Kiddies

Mothers can obtain (in "Alpine") a complete wardrobe, from pilch to little nightgown for a wee Baby. . . . and, for growing Kiddies—from Teenie Tot to Sturdy 'teens—every little "undie" can be obtained in the long-wearing, chill-defying, "Alpine" all-wool fabric.

The shape of each Kiddie garment is scientifically cut to give the freedom of movement so necessary to active healthy children.

"Alpine" for Ladies

Every lady who once wears "Alpine" will prefer it to any other—for it wears longer, doesn't shrink and *always* keeps its elegant shape.

In the "Fashioned" garments the comfort-giving, stylish shape is *woven in* . . . in the "Cut" garments the shape is carefully cut out on scientific lines—and, in both types, strict regard is paid to present-day fashions of outer garments.

S&S "Alpine" Underwear

for Ladies and Children

There's cosy warmth-without-weight and well-fitting comfort in every "Alpine" garment . . . . and there's an "Alpine" garment for every woman, every girl and every child—no matter the individual preference or requirement. For we make all styles . . . and we are constantly revising and adjusting our garments to conform with the prevailing fashion in dress.

Wear *"Alpine"* Underwear—there is no better made.

Every garment bearing the "Alpine" Dog's Head is *guaranteed* against shrinking or loss of shape—provided you follow washing instructions given with each "Alpine" garment.

If you have any difficulty in obtaining "Alpine," just write to Stapley & Smith, Ltd., the manufacturers, who will tell you where, in your district, "Alpine" Underwear can be obtained.

"Alpine" wears so well that the cost is but pence per month of wear.

Stapley & Smith, Ltd., 128, London Wall, E.C.2

Other 'Alpine' Fabrics

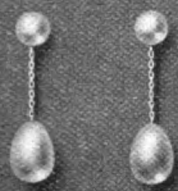
In addition to "all-wool," "Alpine" Underwear can be obtained in many other Fabrics, including Egyptian Cotton, Wool & Cotton, Wool & Mercerised, and Artificial Silk.

Look for the S&S 'Alpine' Dog's Head on every garment . . . Be quite sure you get "Alpine" Underwear with all the outstanding "Alpine" qualities

(3)

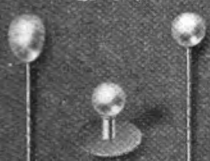
XMAS means Ciro Pearls

Handsome Brooch, with three lustrous Ciro Pearls on platinette bar.
£1 1 0



Ciro Pearl round or pear-shaped Earrings, with solid gold mounts, for pierced or unpierced ears.
£1 1 0 per pair.

Ciro Pearl cross-over Ring, in gold or platinette.
£1 1 0



Ciro Pearl Dress Stud, on gold mount.
£1 1 0

Gold Scarf Pin with fine pear-shaped Ciro Pearl.
£1 1 0

Gold Scarf Pin with exquisite round Ciro Pearl.
£1 1 0

THE Gift that every woman desires: that honours and gratifies its recipient, while it signifies the giver's perfect taste. Ciro Pearls are the Gift Beautiful, the Gift Desirable, the Gift Enduring. Whether in the form of a graceful necklet, or set alluringly as jewels, Ciro Pearls are the offering that is always welcome, always appropriate. They are the one exact replica of the real—the Gift Ideal.

We cordially invite everyone to inspect the unique collection of pearls at our showrooms, or we will send you a necklet of Ciro Pearls 16 inches long, with solid gold clasp, or any of the Ciro Pearl jewels illustrated on this page in beautiful case for One Guinea. Wear them for a fortnight, and compare with any real pearls. If any difference is noticeable, you may return them to us and we will refund your money in full.

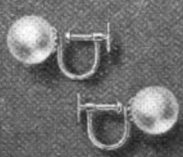
Our handsome new booklet No. 12 describes and illustrates our full range of Ciro Pearl gifts. Post free on request.

Ciro Pearls Ltd

178 · REGENT · STREET · W.1 · DEPT. 12,
48 · OLD BOND STREET · W.1
44 CHEAPSIDE · E.C.2

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BUY CIRO PEARLS ELSEWHERE.——WE HAVE NO AGENTS.

Brooch, with fine single Ciro Pearl of rare orient on platinette double bar.
£1 1 0



Single Ciro Pearl Earrings, on solid gold mounts, for pierced or unpierced ears.
£1 1 0

Ciro Pearl Ring in platinette, with scientific rubies, emeralds or sapphires on either side.
£1 1 0

Very chaste Gold Bar Brooch, with single Ciro Pearl.
£1 1 0

Pretty Three-Pearl Ring in gold.
£1 1 0

Photographic reproduction of our marvellous 16-inch Ciro Pearl Necklet, with Solid Gold clasp, in beautiful case, **£1 1 0** Other lengths at proportionate prices.

THE RECORDS of success given in this new series of School of Accountancy advertisements are not the most remarkable of the hundreds available, but the most typical. They are the stories of men of ordinary intelligence and education, told with the object of giving example and encouragement to all ambitious men who may read them. Apart from the names, which for obvious reasons are fictitious, every fact is certified true and correct by David Paterson, Chartered Accountant, 135, Wellington Street, Glasgow

HE IS IN CHARGE of a STAFF THAT AUTHORISES PAYMENT of £15,000 a DAY

MAULDON thought his education complete at the age of eighteen. It was the monotony of his salary that disillusioned him.

Mauldon's association with The School of Accountancy occupied nearly a year. His practical benefit was promotion and a large salary increase. But mostly he prized his new, inner consciousness of greater mental strength and self-confidence.

When, later, The School wrote congratulating Mauldon upon securing First Place in the Final Examination of The Corporation of Accountants, he concluded a very interesting reply with the news—"*I am now in immediate charge of a staff that authorises the payment of about £10,000 to £15,000 a day.*"

Not for "any and every" man

You may ask how it is that School of Accountancy Students are so consistently successful. A point which has great bearing on this is that The School accepts no enrolment unless it is convinced of the man's ability to benefit by training. The School realises that the power to rise to a responsible position and command a high salary is not possessed by any and every man. So whenever a man's application leads to the belief that he is unlikely to succeed under The School's system of training, he is frankly told so, and no fee of any description is charged.

Opportunities within your reach

Every control position in commerce is open to ambitious men by School of Accountancy training. There are Courses for men without the slightest previous experience in business, and Courses for men already holding Managerial and Executive positions.

Besides training men for such positions as Accountants, Secretaries, Cost Accountants, Office Managers, Cashiers, etc., The School extends the qualifications of technical men by teaching them the finance and accountancy of business.

Train for Professional Status

The following Professional examinations are open to anyone. Success in many of these Examinations confers upon the Student Professional Status and the right to use after his name letters which are recognised qualifications all over the world. School of Accountancy Students rarely fail to pass at the first attempt.

The London Association of Accountants (*A.L.A.A.*).
The Chartered Institute of Secretaries (*A.C.I.S.*).
The Secretaries' Association (*A.I.S.A.*).
The Institute of Cost and Works Accountants (*A.C.W.A.*).
The Corporation of Accountants (*A.C.R.A.*).

Other independent Examinations for which The School trains men are C.A., S.A.A., I.M.T.A., R.S.A., L.C.C., Institute of Bankers, B.Com. Degree, University Matriculation.

Up to 800% increases in salary

From time to time The School invites its students to state the exact extent to which they have benefitted by their training. The result to date is one long series of striking achievements, in which increases in salary range up to 800 per cent. That these achievements are in the majority of cases the outcome of six to twelve months' spare-time study proves that there is no way to business success more swift and sure than that offered you by School of Accountancy Postal Training.

This Valuable Business Guide——FREE

It contains useful information about careers and business training, gives particulars of all Courses and Terms, and includes facts which will convince you that The School's Postal Training will qualify you to fill a responsible executive position.

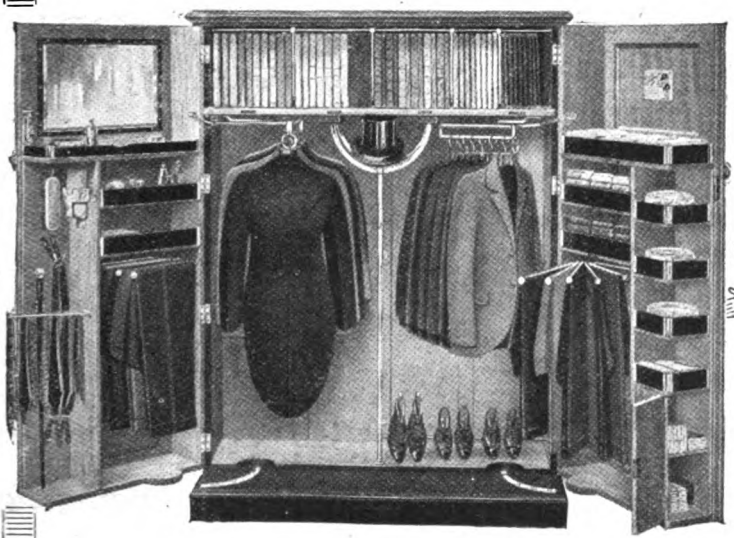
Write for a copy to-day to

THE SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTANCY

2 West Regent Street, GLASGOW
10 Essex St., Strand, London, W.C.2
32 Victoria Street - - - MANCHESTER
22 Sir Thomas Street - - - LIVERPOOL
Standard Buildings, City Square - LEEDS
8 Newhall Street - - - - BIRMINGHAM
And at EDINBURGH, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE, CARDIFF, and BRISTOL.

★ ***If you will make an effort to qualify for a responsible position in business THE SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTANCY will stand by you until you succeed***

The Reward of Effort.



The Compactom Clothing Cabinet

Constructed of selected Mahogany or Oak throughout, the exteriors are finished in standard shades of Mahogany, Walnut or Oak, that will harmonise with any decorative scheme.

Overall dimensions : 4' 3" x 5' 7" x 1' 10".

To ensure perfect delivery, even where entrance space is limited, it is made in five portions.

The separate compartments are adjustable and adaptable to any quantity and kind of clothing.

Heavily plated fittings extend in such a manner as to make the clothing immediately accessible and always in view.

Every possible requirement is provided for in this Clothing Cabinet, which will preserve in properly proportioned compartments three times as much as any ordinary wardrobe.

29½ Guineas

DELIVERED FREE IN ENGLAND, SCOTLAND & WALES.

A Good Clothing Cabinet, like any other good work, is the outcome of inspiration, perspiration, and cold common sense, and it is essentially upon these that Compactom has built and reinforced its reputation.

COMPACTOM, LTD.,
VANTAGE HOUSE,
41/44, Upper Berkeley St., W.1.
Phone : Padd. 5002.

Closing date Dec 20

£1,000
FIRST PRIZE
£1,500 IN PRIZES

J. S. FRY & SONS, Ltd. (Bristol & London)

GIRL NAME COMPETITION

J. S. Fry & Sons, Ltd., Bristol and London, want a name for their trade figure, and you are asked to place in what you consider their order of popular esteem, the ten names on the Entry Form printed below.

A first prize of £1,000 will be awarded to the competitor whose forecast is nearest to the popular verdict, as shown by the votes recorded.

There will be a second prize of £250, and five further prizes of £50 each will be awarded to the next best forecasts.

There will also be awarded boxes of chocolates as one thousand consolation prizes.

In the event of ties, all or any of the prizes will be divided accordingly and pooled if need be for that purpose.

Competitors may send in as many Entry Forms as they wish, but each Entry Form must be accompanied by the wrapper from a ¼-lb. tin of Fry's Breakfast Cocoa. The wrapper from a ½-lb. tin counts for two entries, and from a 1-lb. tin four entries.

The decision of the Board of Directors of J. S. Fry & Sons, Ltd., as to the prize awards and as to any other matter relating to the competition, shall be accepted as final and binding, and competitors shall enter the competition on that footing only.

All envelopes (properly stamped if sent by post) containing the Entry Forms must be addressed "J. S. Fry & Sons, Ltd., 2-11, Union Street, Bristol," and be marked "FRY NAME," and must arrive at that address not later than twelve noon on Thursday, December 20th, 1923.

J. S. Fry & Sons, Ltd., will not be responsible for any entries being lost, mislaid or delayed. Proof of posting will not be accepted as proof of delivery or receipt.

Letters must not be enclosed with entries, and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the prize awards, or this competition, or anything connected therewith.

J. S. Fry & Sons, Ltd., do not bind themselves to use any name for which a prize may be awarded.

Fry's

No one in the employment of the Company is eligible for the Competition. TO THE TRADE.—£100, £25 and five £5's, for the retailers named by prize-winners in this competition.

Cut out, fill up, and send in this form.

ENTRY FORM Ask your Grocer for further entry forms.

Place these ten names in order of popularity.
Enter figure 1 opposite your first choice and so on.

	Susan		Priscilla
	Matilda		Patience
	Barbara		Grace
	Prudence		Phyllis
	Elsie		Jane

I agree to abide by the rules and to accept the decision of the Board of Directors of J. S. Fry & Sons, Ltd., as final and binding in all respects.
Write in capitals.

Name & Address .....

.....

County .....

Cocoa bought from .....

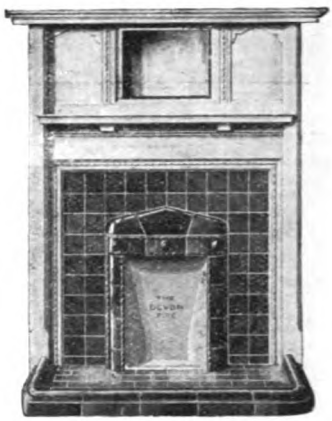
STRAND XMAS No.

.....

To: J. S. FRY & SONS, LTD., 2-11, Union Street, BRISTOL

420

THE "DEVON" FIRE



Don't delay—do what others are doing—replace your old-fashioned fires with THE "DEVON" FIRE

The "Devon" Fire entirely dispenses with the dirty and exhausting labour of blacking grates, polishing fenders or whitening hearths. The only cleaning involved is the removal of the handful of ashes and cinders that remain after use and the relaying of the fire. An occasional rub with a damp cloth keeps the non-absorbent glazed surface of the tiles and briquettes bright and clean. Save your time and avoid unnecessary and uncongenial labour by installing a "Devon" Fire now.

Write for Illustrated Catalogue.

CANDY & CO., LTD.,

87, Newman St., Oxford St., W.1.

Works: Heathfield Station, Newton Abbot, Devon.

MASON PEARSON
London England

The Name that Guarantees your HAIR BRUSH.

The ***Mason Pearson Hair Brush*** is worthy of your most careful consideration, for it has unique features that no other Hair Brush possesses. The tufts of genuine Wild-Boar Bristles do their work both speedily and thoroughly. You feel them get right down to the scalp with a pleasant invigorating tingle. Wonderfully beneficial to the Hair.

Ask your Hairdresser what he thinks of the

Mason Pearson Hair Brush.

Of Boots', Harrods', Barkers', Selfridges', Army and Navy Stores, Civil Service Stores, Timothy White's, and all high-class Hairdressers, Stores and Chemists, or direct, post free, from :—

MASON PEARSON SELLING AGENCY, 61, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1.

Look for the Name on the Handle

for substitutes are often pressed upon you. Made in four grades—***"Junior"*** without cleaner **7/6**, with cleaner **8/6** ; ***"Popular"*** *at* **10/6** ; ***"Standard"*** *at* **15/-** ; ***"Extra"*** *at* **18/6** (cleaner included with each of these) in a Carton with full instructions. Also in ***"Military"*** *at* **10/6**, **15/-** and **18/6** each.

Easier to Use—Better Results

IDEAL POLISH FOR FURNITURE

Johnson's Liquid Wax is the perfect furniture polish. It imparts a hard, dry, oil-less polish which will not finger print or collect dust and lint.

A PRESERVER OF LINOLEUM

REJUVENATES WOODWORK

You can easily keep your floors and woodwork in perfect condition by polishing occasionally with Johnson's Wax. It forms a thin protecting finish coat.

JOHNSON'S
Paste - Liquid - Powdered
POLISHING WAX

—the superior polish—gives a beautiful, lasting, lustrous finish to everything that has a polishable surface. The best homes always use it for polishing furniture, linoleum, floors and all woodwork, because it not only gives a wonderful polish that does not collect dust or show finger prints, but cleans at the same time. On new or old furniture, it gives equally good results. Sold in three convenient forms.

JOHNSON'S POLISHING WAX—PASTE.—For polishing floors of all kinds, wood, linoleum, til marble, etc. In 6d., 1/-, 2/6, 4/-, 8/-, 14/6 sizes.

JOHNSON'S POLISHING WAX—LIQUID.—For polishing furniture, woodwork, leather goods, boots and shoes, and motor cars, etc. In 2/6, 4/-, 8/- sizes.

JOHNSON'S POWDERED WAX.—Gives perfect dancing floors. In 1/9, 2/6, 4/- sizes.

Insist upon Johnson's—there is no substitute.
Obtainable at all the best shops.

Book on Home Beautifying FREE

S. C. JOHNSON & SON, Ltd., (Dept. S12), West Drayton, Middlesex.
"The Wood Finishing Authorities"

Please send me free and postpaid your book telling how to make my home artistic, cheery and inviting. I understand that it explains just what materials to use and how to apply them—includes colour card—gives covering capacities, etc.

My Name_____

My Address_____

My Dealer's Name_____

WOODHOUSE'S

THE IDEAL HOME has been the dream of many thousands of people, but Woodhouse's have now made it capable of immediate realisation. You can furnish a home of any size for a very small outlay and on exceptionally easy terms of purchase with fine quality Furniture that has never been so low priced since pre-war days, and is now down to rock bottom prices.

WILL FURNISH A 4-ROOMED HOUSE, FLAT OR MAISONETTE ON PAYMENT OF

£10

Consisting of

DINING ROOM DRAWING ROOM
BEST BEDROOM SPARE BEDROOM

To-day's value 155 gns.

REDUCED PRICE (the home as described) £110
CASH PRICE £100

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £10, the balance to be paid at the rate of £2 10 0 per month.

PRICES OF SEPARATE PIECES ON APPLICATION.

ORDER BY POST.

Those living out of town may safely order by post from this advertisement or from our Catalogue "S M" (which will be sent post free on application), the Illustrations of which are taken from photos of the actual goods. Our Fire and Life Policies can be had free for the asking.

THIS HANDSOME BEDROOM FURNITURE WILL BE DELIVERED FREE TO YOUR HOME ON PAYMENT OF **80/-**

Sheraton Bedroom Suite, Mahogany Inlaid Satinwood, size 4 ft., with full-size Bedstead to match. The latest in design and finish. To-day's value 50 gns.

REDUCED PRICE 39 Gns.
CASH PRICE 35 Gns.
If with 5ft. Chest instead of Washstand, 50/- extra.

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £4, the balance to be paid at the rate of 24/- per month.

THIS FINE JACOBEAN BEDROOM SUITE AND BEDSTEAD WILL BE DELIVERED FREE TO YOUR HOME ON PAYMENT OF **40/-**

3 ft. Jacobean Oak Bedroom Suite and full-size Bedstead to match. Thoroughly well made and finished. To-day's value 30 gns

REDUCED PRICE 21 Gns.
CASH PRICE 19 Gns.
If with 2ft. 6in. Chest instead of Washstand, 37/6 extra.

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £2, the balance to be paid at the rate of £1 per month.

THIS SPLENDID DINING ROOM FURNITURE WILL BE DELIVERED FREE TO YOUR HOME ON PAYMENT OF **50/-**

Dining Room consisting of Handsome Oak Sideboard, size 4 ft., with two spacious cupboards and two drawers. Oak Extending Dining Table, size 5 ft. × 3 ft. Five-piece Oak Dining Room Chairs (one arm and four small). Upholstered in antique Rexine, any shade. Thoroughly well made and finished. To-day's value, 35 gns.

REDUCED PRICE 25 Gns.
CASH PRICE 22½ Gns.

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £2 10 0, the balance to be paid at the rate of £1 per month

THIS DRAWING ROOM FURNITURE WILL BE DELIVERED FREE TO YOUR HOME ON PAYMENT OF **60/-**

Drawing Room consisting of Cosy Settee and two Easy Chairs, stuffed fibre and hair; carved fronts; well sprung and upholstered in rich French Damasks, various designs and colourings, and with soft loose cush ions. Mahogany Inlaid Ca binet Table. To-day's value 35 Gns.

REDUCED PRICE 28 Gns.
CASH PRICE 25 Gns.

Delivered free to your home immediately on payment of £3, the balance to be paid at the rate of £1 per month.

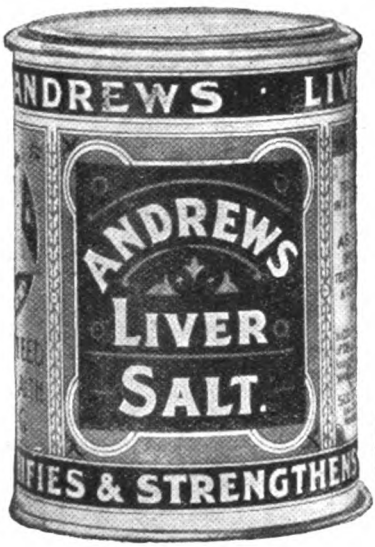
BRANCHES:

LIVERPOOL— 44-46, LORD STREET.
NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE— 49-51, CLAYTON STREET & 4, NUN STREET.
EDINBURGH— 13, 15, 17, NICOLSON STREET.
GLASGOW— 74-76, UNION STREET.
FALKIRK— 46, 48, 50, VICAR STREET.

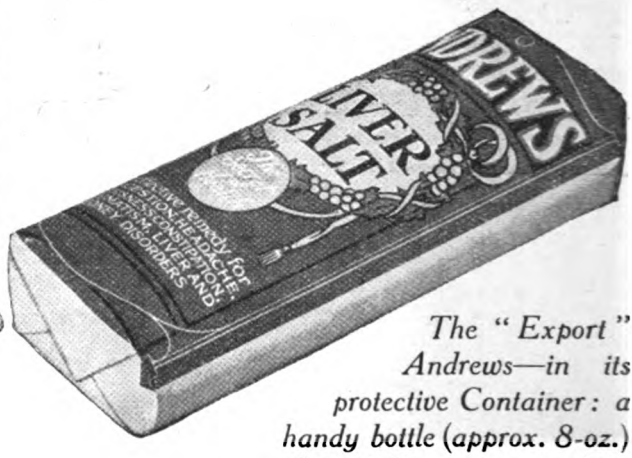
JAS. WOODHOUSE & SON
50-52, LUDGATE HILL
LONDON, E.C.4
Telephones: CENTRAL 4342 & 1319 (2 lines)

BRANCHES:

SOUTHAMPTON— 120, ABOVE BAR.
SUNDERLAND— 196-197, HIGH STREET WEST.
MIDDLESBROUGH— NEWPORT HOUSE.
BISHOP AUCKLAND— BONANZA ARCADE.
MONTREAL & TORONTO (CANADA)



"The familiar green Tin"
—the most extensively used Saline in the British Isles.



The "Export" Andrews—in its protective Container: a handy bottle (approx. 8-oz.) with airtight screw cap which acts also as a measure.

The National Health Safeguard

During 30 years of increasingly extended test, Andrews Liver Salt has proved its worth as the reliable *family* corrective.

In thousands upon thousands of healthy, happy homes, Andrews is in all-the-year-round use, correcting Life's little Ills as they arise in Father, Mother, the Children and their Grandparents.

Buy a tin and keep it handy. Then, whenever the normal tone is lacking, take a teaspoonful, or two (give proportionately less to the children), in a glass of warm water for 2 or 3 days running. In gentle, thorough fashion, Andrews *cleanses* the human mechanism, quickly restoring that regularity of physical habit which is the basis of cheery good Health.

9d. 4-OZ. SIZE **1/4** 8-OZ. SIZE

SOLD EVERYWHERE
By Chemists, Grocers, and Stores.

Andrews in use Overseas

——the corrective help of Andrews is, perhaps, most welcome in Hot Climates and on Shipboard, where living conditions pre-dispose its need.

To residents abroad who may have difficulty in obtaining supplies, we will send the Export Andrews (approx. 8-oz. bottle), postage and packing free for 3/6 if name and address of usual Retailer be mentioned when ordering.

Address enquiries from Overseas to: "Export Dept. S.M.1,"
SCOTT & TURNER, Ltd.
Manufacturers,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Eng.

H. SAMUEL 85 SHOPS ABLAZE WITH XMAS GIFTS AT FACTORY PRICES

PRINCIPAL BRANCHES:

LONDON—
47, King St., Hammersmith.
22, Liverpool St., E.C.
11, Walworth Rd., S.E.
22, Broadway, Stratford
16, North End, Croydon
42, Powis St., Woolwich
13, High St., Islington
281, Pentonville Road, King's Cross.

PROVINCES—
Bath: 15, Union St.
Blackpool: 7, Church St.
Bradford: 75, Kirkgate
Brighton: 29, Western Road
Bristol: 2 & 37, Wine St.
Derby: 31, Cornmarket
Exeter: 211, High St.
Gloucester: 3, Southgate St. (The Cross)
Hull: 9, Silver Street
Ipswich: 5, Tavern St.
Leeds: 39, Briggate
Leicester: 7, Gallowtreegate
Lincoln: 231, High St.
Middlesbrough: 46, Linthorpe Rd.
Newcastle-on-Tyne: 2, Grainger St. West
Northampton: 2, Gold St.
Nottingham: 31, Long Row
Norwich: 15, The Walk
Oxford: Carfax Corner
Plymouth: 11, George [St.
Portsmouth: 141, Commercial Rd.
Preston: 17, Fishergate
Reading: 50, Broad St.
Sheffield: 43, High St.
Southampton: 155, High St.
Sunderland: 2, Havelock Buildings.
Wolverhampton: 1, Queen St.
Worcester: 27, The Cross
York: 29, Coney St.

WALES—
Cardiff: 7, St. Mary St. and 6, Queen St.
Merthyr: 119, High St.
Newport: 26a, High St. & 172, Commercial St.
Swansea: 265, Oxford St.

SCOTLAND—
Aberdeen: 72, Union St.
Dundee: 1, Reform St.
Edinburgh: 40, North Bridge; 25, Princes St.; and 46, Leith St.
Glasgow: 134 and 136, Argyle St.
Send a postcard for full list.

THERE'S AN H. SAMUEL SHOP NEAR YOU—
packed with thousands of Xmas Gifts that bring endless delight to all! And when you buy at any of H. Samuel's 85 Shops you buy

DIRECT FROM H. SAMUEL'S OWN IMMENSE FACTORY
at prices that mean enormous saving! See the amazing bargains in Watches, Jewellery, Electro-plate and Cutlery, in many cases at

POUNDS BELOW USUAL RETAIL PRICES!
Call at your nearest Branch to-day!

A FULL MONTH'S TRIAL.

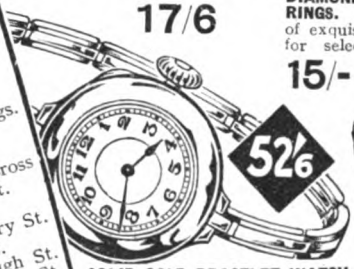
GOLD NECKLET & PENDANT
Set with Turquoise & Pearls.

SOLID GOLD WRIST WATCH.
High-grade jewelled movement, 10 years' warranty. Perfect timekeeper **37/6**

ROLLED GOLD LEVER WATCH
Fully jewelled lever movement. Warranted for 10 years. Splendid timekeeper.
45/-

SOLID GOLD BROOCH. Set with Pearls, and Amethyst Crystal.
17/6

AMAZING VALUE IN DIAMOND & GEM RINGS. Hundreds of exquisite designs for selection from
15/-



SOLID GOLD BRACELET WATCH.
High-grade jewelled movement. 10 years' warranty. Accurately timed and adjusted.
52/6

CALL NOW!

H. SAMUEL
The Empire's Largest Jewellers.

103, 119 & 121, MARKET STREET, MANCHESTER.

SEND A POSTCARD FOR THIS BIG ILLUSTRATED BOOK of money-saving bargains in Jewellery, Watches, &c. **FREE!**

H. SAMUEL, LTD.

Father buys a present—for himself

He had long promised himself that little present. All his other secret longings had been skilfully anticipated by a watchful family, yet . . . There was that pipe-rack to be put up in the study, some more coat-hooks would be necessary in the hall this Christmas, not to mention other odd jobs about the house . . . Yes, if those fittings were to be properly fixed to the wall so that they would stay up for good, he must have that box of Rawlplugs.

Buy an Outfit to-day—it will save you pounds. Particulars of Rawlplug Outfits and other attractive presents are given below.

RAWLPLUGS

Household Outfit.

50 Rawlplugs (*No. 8 assorted lengths*). A Rawlplug Toolholder and one Bit. A supply of round head and countersunk screws and screw eyes, screw hooks, cup hooks, square hooks, etc., and full instructions - - - **3/6**

Refills (*No 8 assorted sizes*), Boxes of 50, 1/6; 100, 2/6.

Mechanic's Outfit.

100 Rawlplugs (*No. 8 assorted lengths*), A Special Rawlplug Toolholder and two Bits. Supply of round head and countersunk screws and screw eyes, screw hooks, cup hooks, square hooks, etc., and full instructions - - - **5/6**

With Recess Screws and Screw-driver instead of Slot Screws, at same price - - - - **5/6**

RAWLPLUG ALUMINIUM FITTINGS.

A series of very attractive presents. They are highly polished, with a silver-like finish, and withstand steam and moisture without a trace of rust or tarnish—and yet cost less than half the price of nickel-plated fittings.

The Special BATH-ROOM SET comprises: Glass Shelf, 2ft., Towel Rail, 2ft., both complete with brackets, Toothbrush Holder, Toilet Fixture, Glass Tumbler Holder, 3 Coat Hooks, Nickel-plated screws for fixing. Complete in special cardboard box **21/-**

Ask your Ironmonger for complete list of all Fittings.

RAWLPLUG AMATEUR TOOL OUTFIT.

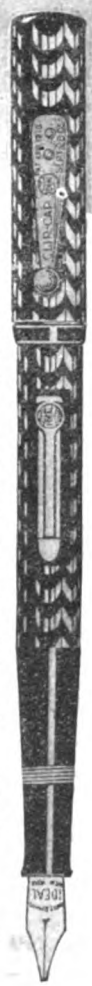
WE have placed on the market a special Amateur's Tool Outfit which contains only the very best quality Sheffield-made tools, and which we claim at **17/6** offers the finest value obtainable.

LIST OF CONTENTS: 14-inch Hand Saw, Hammer, ¾-inch Chisel, 8-inch Screwdriver, 2-ft. Folding Rule, Carpenter's Pencil, Pair of Side-cutting Pliers, Gimlet, Bradawl, Half round File, Oil Can, Sand Paper, Tin of Croid Liquid Glue, Supply of Assorted Screws, Eyes, Hooks, etc., Supply of Assorted Nails and Tacks, Copy of 68-pp. book, "Tips on Odd Jobs about the House." **17/6**

THE RAWLPLUG COMPANY, LIMITED,
Gloucester House, Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.

Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

"Writes with ease and speed in any position".



Imagine the look of surprise of relative or friend on opening the little package containing your gift of a Waterman's Ideal. Imagine the exclamation of delight on first trying the pen to find how easily it glides over the paper. A gift so charming is sure of instant appreciation. A gift so helpful cannot fail to secure a prominent and permanent place in the memory of the recipient. You can send it to any part of the world at a trifling cost for postage.

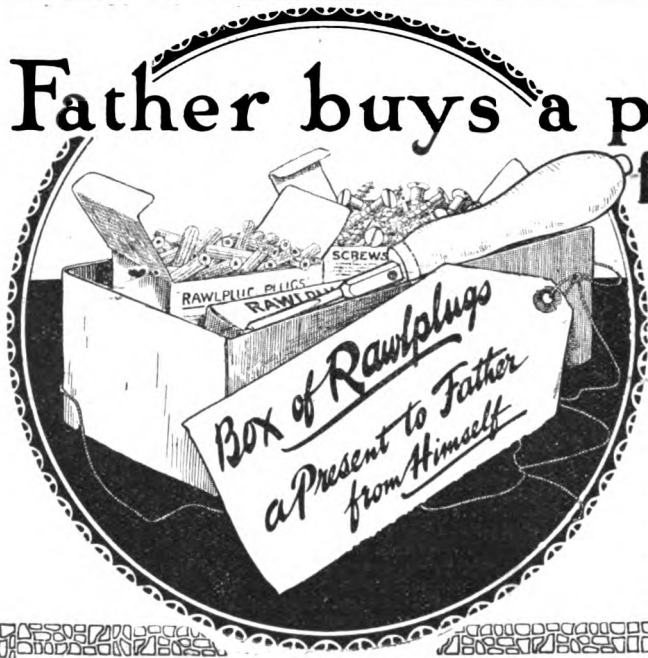
Three Types: "Regular" Type from **12/6**; "Safety" Type from **17/6**; "Self-filling" Type (with Patent Boxed-in Lever), No. 52, **17/6**; No. 54, **22/6**; No. 55, **27/6**; No. 56, **32/6**; No. 58, **42/-**; Clip-cap, **1/-** extra. PRESENTATION PENS IN SILVER AND GOLD. Nibs to suit all hands.

Every pen fully guaranteed. **Of Stationers and Jewellers.**
"The Pen Book" sent free on request.

L. G. SLOAN, Ltd., The Pen Corner, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Use Waterman's Ideal Ink. Best for all Fountain Pens.

Father buys a present—for himself



He had long promised himself that little present. All his other secret longings had been skilfully anticipated by a watchful family, yet . . . There was that pipe-rack to be put up in the study, some more coat-hooks would be necessary in the hall this Christmas, not to mention other odd jobs about the house . . . Yes, if those fittings were to be properly fixed to the wall so that they would stay up for good, he must have that box of Rawlplugs.

Buy an Outfit to-day—it will save you pounds. Particulars of Rawlplug Outfits and other attractive presents are given below.

RAWLPLUGS

Household Outfit.

50 Rawlplugs (*No. 8 assorted lengths*). A Rawlplug Toolholder and one Bit. A supply of round head and countersunk screws and screw eyes, screw hooks, cup hooks, square hooks, etc., and full instructions - - - **3/6**

Refills (*No 8 assorted sizes*), Boxes of 50, 1/6; 100, 2/6.

Mechanic's Outfit.

100 Rawlplugs (*No. 8 assorted lengths*), A Special Rawlplug Toolholder and two Bits. Supply of round head and countersunk screws and screw eyes, screw hooks, cup hooks, square hooks, etc., and full instructions - - - **5/6**

With Recess Screws and Screw-driver instead of Slot Screws, at same price - - - - **5/6**

RAWLPLUG ALUMINIUM FITTINGS.

A series of very attractive presents. They are highly polished, with a silver-like finish, and withstand steam and moisture without a trace of rust or tarnish—and yet cost less than half the price of nickel-plated fittings.

The Special BATH-ROOM SET comprises: Glass Shelf, 2ft., Towel Rail, 2ft., both complete with brackets, Toothbrush Holder, Toilet Fixture, Glass Tumbler Holder, 3 Coat Hooks, Nickel-plated screws for fixing. Complete in special cardboard box **21/-**

Ask your Ironmonger for complete list of all Fittings.

RAWLPLUG AMATEUR TOOL OUTFIT.

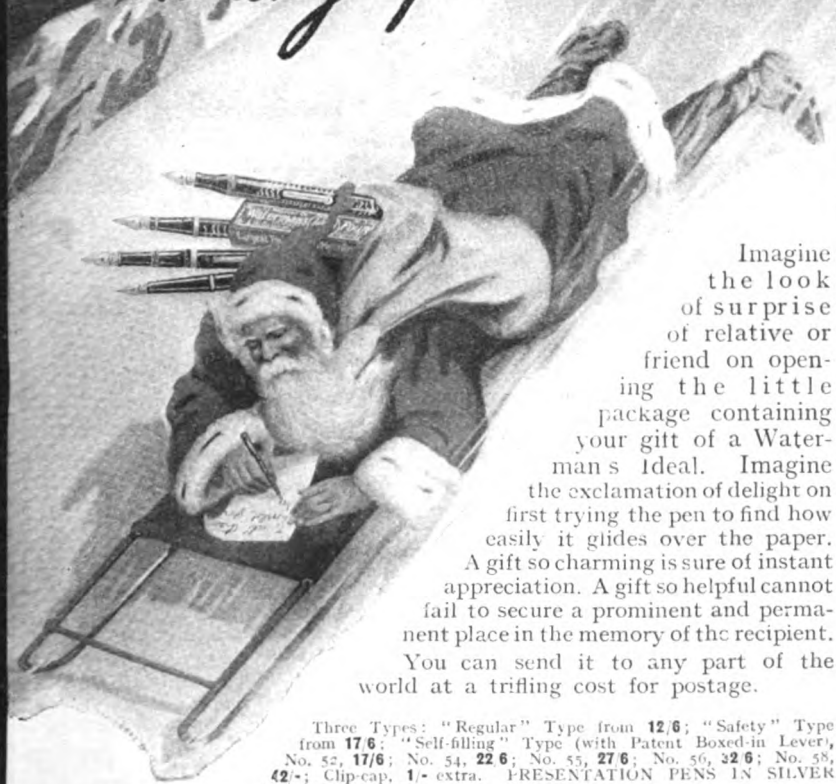
WE have placed on the market a special Amateur's Tool Outfit which contains only the very best quality Sheffield-made tools, and which we claim at **17/6** offers the finest value obtainable.

LIST OF CONTENTS: 14-inch Hand Saw, Hammer, ¾-inch Chisel, 8-inch Screwdriver, 2-ft. Folding Rule, Carpenter's Pencil, Pair of Side-cutting Pliers, Gimlet, Bradawl, Half round File, Oil Can, Sand Paper, Tin of Croid Liquid Glue, Supply of Assorted Screws, Eyes, Hooks, etc., Supply of Assorted Nails and Tacks, Copy of 68-pp. book, "Tips on Odd Jobs about the House." **17/6**

THE RAWLPLUG COMPANY, LIMITED,
Gloucester House, Cromwell Road, London, S.W.7.

Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen

"Writes with ease and speed in any position".



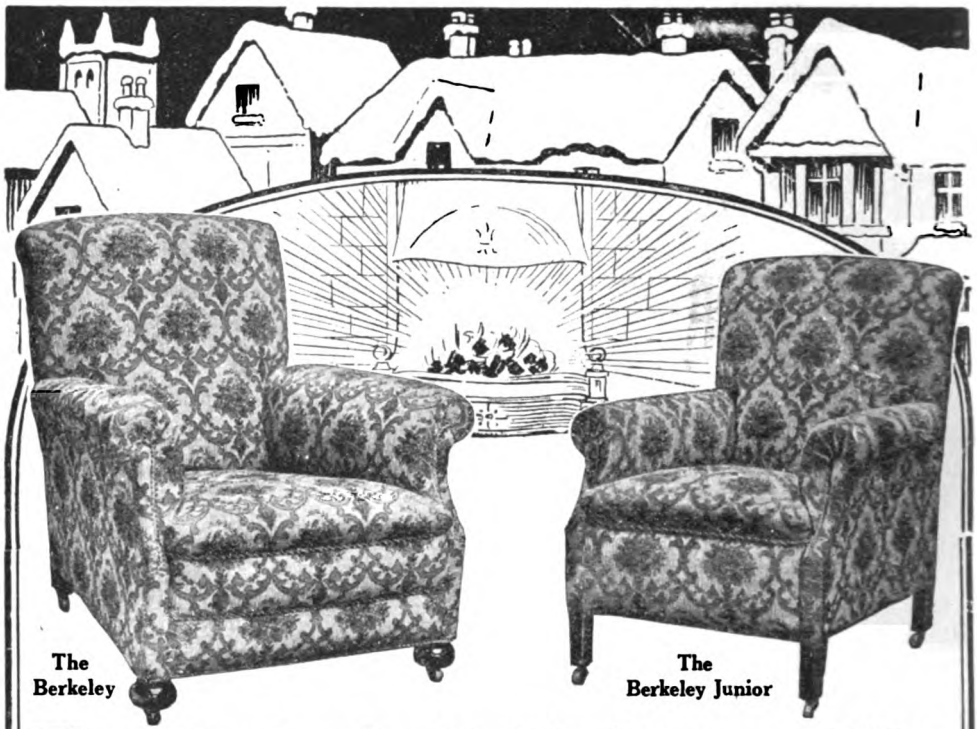
Imagine the look of surprise of relative or friend on opening the little package containing your gift of a Waterman's Ideal. Imagine the exclamation of delight on first trying the pen to find how easily it glides over the paper. A gift so charming is sure of instant appreciation. A gift so helpful cannot fail to secure a prominent and permanent place in the memory of the recipient. You can send it to any part of the world at a trifling cost for postage.

Three Types: "Regular" Type from **12/6**; "Safety" Type from **17/6**; "Self-filling" Type (with Patent Boxed-in Lever), No. 52, **17/6**; No. 54, **22/6**; No. 55, **27/6**; No. 56, **32/6**; No. 58, **42/-**; Clip-cap, **1/-** extra. PRESENTATION PENS IN SILVER AND GOLD. Nibs to suit all hands.

Every pen fully guaranteed. **Of Stationers and Jewellers.**
"The Pen Book" sent free on request.

L. G. SLOAN, Ltd., The Pen Corner, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Use Waterman's Ideal Ink. Best for all Fountain Pens.



The Berkeley

The Berkeley Junior

The Best of all Christmas Gifts

THE Berkeley (Regd.) EASY CHAIR

LET your Christmas Gift express the *permanence* of your goodwill towards your friend or relative. A Berkeley will do this in no uncertain manner. It is not only a handsome gift, it is a lasting gift, a gift that will be admired for its appearance, loved for its cosy comfort, and treasured for its happy fireside associations. A Berkeley makes friends for life. ORDERS SHOULD BE PLACED IMMEDIATELY for Xmas delivery.

THE BERKELEY

NOTHING but exceptional value and quality has raised the Berkeley to the premier position in the world of upholstery. The Berkeley cannot be judged by its low price. It has the depth of springing, the expert designing, the rest-giving comfort and the fine materials and workmanship of much more expensive chairs. But because it is sold in thousands direct from the factories, without any intermediate profits or expenses, the wonderful value is possible. Get a Berkeley NOW.

CASH PRICE: **85/-**

or 15/- with order and 5 payments of 15/- monthly.

THE BERKELEY JUNIOR

THIS model is constructed on the same principles as the Berkeley with springs in the seat, back, and front edge, and it will give the greatest satisfaction in comfort and wear. It is especially suitable for use in rooms where space is limited.

CASH PRICE: **67/6**

or 15/- with order and 5 payments of 11/- monthly.

WRITE NOW FOR PATTERNS—POST FREE

SOLD ON THE MONEY-BACK PRINCIPLE.—Soon after receipt of first payment with your order we send the Berkeley Easy Chair or Berkeley Junior *carriage paid* in England and Wales (Scotland extra). If upon examination it is not completely satisfactory, you may return it within seven days AT OUR EXPENSE and we will REFUND YOUR MONEY IN FULL.

H. J. SEARLE & SON, LTD., *Manufacturing Upholsterers*
(Dept. S.M.) 70-78, OLD KENT ROAD, LONDON, S.E.1.

West End Showrooms:
133, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.1.
And at 61-63, London Road, Croydon.

"A Gillette!—OH! THANKS!!"

Spontaneous and sincere are the thanks that the gift of a Gillette brings. This handsome shaving service is truly the most practical expression of Yuletide good-will it is possible to find. It is a gift that will be valued and used daily for years to come.

GET YOUR CHRISTMAS GILLETTES NOW. Ask the dealer to show you the full range including the

NEW STANDARD, Triple silver-plated New Improved Gillette Safety Razor. Metal Box containing 12 double edge Gillette Blades (24 shaving edges) in Genuine Leather Case, purple velvet and satin lined **21/-**
Also Gold Plated **25/-**
Sold by Cutlers, Ironmongers, Chemists, Hairdressers, Jewellers everywhere.

WRITE FOR BOOKLET.
GILLETTE SAFETY RAZOR LTD., 184-188, Great Portland Street, London, W. 1.

The ideal Xmas Gift for Men

By appointment to His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales.

Gillette Safety Razor

TRADE Gillette MARK
KNOWN THE WORLD OVER

NO STROPPING NO HONING

A MERRY CHRISTMAS

These sweets
will help to make a
MERRY CHRISTMAS

Everybody loves the pure deliciousness of CLARNICO SWEETMEATS—and the two varieties of LILY BRAZILS are the ideal sweets for the Christmas holidays. Their sweetness embodies the true spirit of the season. They are delightful for parties. They are so pure that they can't upset the kiddies.

CLARNICO CHOCOLATE LILY BRAZILS

The famous sugar-butter-cream confection, studded with choice Brazil nuts and covered in finest chocolate. A revelation of what very nice chocolates can be. **9D** ¼ LB

CLARNICO LILY BRAZILS

The "centres" of Chocolate Lily Brazils without the chocolate covering. Each one is daintily wrapped so that it is spotlessly clean as well as pure. **8D** ¼ LB

Both made by the Clarnico people

CLARKE NICKOLLS & COOMBS LTD VICTORIA PARK LONDON

She always knows what to give to a Baby at Christmas!

Her letter (from Birmingham) explains the reason. We hold the original letter at the address given below. It can be inspected at any time. Here is an extract:—

"Delighted with my own Baby Rug, which has done daily service "for 14 months and is just as good as new. I am never at a loss to "know what to give as a present to a Baby."

It is the faithful "Otterburn" that sees to the *safeness* of a strength-giving, fresh air, outdoors-every-day Baby Life. You want *your* Baby to be one of those healthy, gurgling, good-to-look-at youngsters, so *your* Baby, too, must have an "Otterburn" . . . and, when it is time for you to think of Christmas Gifts to your friends' Babies, you will not go wrong in introducing to them a rug like your own Baby's inseparable companion—the "Otterburn."

The "Otterburn" is substantial, fleecy and warm without undue weight. It lasts for years and washes excellently. In fact, with ordinary care, *it improves* with washing. Handy yet ample in size, the "Otterburn" measures 30 ins. by 36 ins., and is made in grey, cream, sky, saxe, rose, navy and biscuit colours. Price **13/11**

Every hour of the twenty-four, waking or sleeping, *your* baby could not have a more faithful guardian against Baby chills and ills than this honest "Otterburn" Rug. For Cot or Cradle it makes a cosy blanket; when Baby "walks out" it does protecting duty as a Pram Rug; indoors it makes the snuggest Nursing Wrap.

The "Otterburn" as a Pram Cover.

As a Nursing Wrap.

As a Cradle Coverlet.

Each manufacturing process is personally controlled by Waddells of the third and fourth generation. Spinning, weaving, dyeing, and finishing are in full accord with the "Otterburn" principles of honesty and goodness—laid down in 1821 by the first William Waddell.

Sold by Drapers, Pram Sellers, etc.

Ask to see "Otterburn" Baby Rugs and look for the little tab. If your draper cannot supply we will despatch the Rug either to your own or Baby's address. State colour, enclose remittance for 13/11 and send also your Draper's name and address so that we can credit him with the sale.

13/11 Otterburn Rug

MADE FROM NECK-AND-SHOULDER NEW CHEVIOT WOOL. (2))

Trade enquiries are invited from Drapers, Pram Sellers and Stores dealing in Baby-Wear.

A WARNING.

The silk-woven Tab showing the old Mill is stitched on each genuine Otterburn Rug. Look for it always. If you are offered an imitation, say "No" firmly: take no chances with Baby's Health and Comfort.

Otterburn Mill, Ltd., Otterburn, NORTHUMBERLAND.

Look for the little Tab.

The little Otterburn Tab, below, in effect, says: "This Rug, made—as all Baby-things should be made—by people with a conscience, is worth *far more* than its very reasonable price—for it safeguards the health of your Baby."

Orlik

BRUYÈRE ANTIQUE.

Shrewd judges smoke ORLIK PIPES.

All the Orlik shapes shown on this page are obtainable in Bruyère Antique quality. The beautifully grained Briar root, specially selected for its compactness, is subjected to an exclusive heating and drying process that drives out all moisture. From the first pipeful you'll find it smoke perfectly. See that every pipe is plainly stamped "**ORLIK**"—none other is genuine.

All Bruyère Antique pipes are obtainable from most good tobacconists throughout the world. Price **12/6** *(except Nos.* 55 *and* 60, *which are* **10/6**).

Trade enquiries to:—

ORLIK, 62, BARBICAN, LONDON, E.C.1. ***Est. 1899.***

Let "Mr. Pic-quik" help you to get the most INTO & OUT OF *your wardrobe.*

THE best present for anyone who uses a wardrobe

JUST think of the transformation the "Pic-quik" Coat Rail effects!

In place of the usual time-wasting clothes-spoiling tangle of coat-hangers and garments at the back of the wardrobe, there is a neat pull-out rail which takes at least twice the number of hangers—tidily behind each other. The garments all hang flat, there is no creasing or crushing; the rail slides forward at a touch, bringing all the clothes right outside the wardrobe and affording ample space for the selection and removal of garments.

The usefulness and handsome appearance of a "Pic-quik" Coat Rail will call to mind the giver's kindly thought and happy choice every time the wardrobe is used.

PATENT

Everitt's "PIC-QUIK" Coat Rail

—makes "care of clothes" easy.

Two can be fitted side by side, if desired, in large wardrobes. View below shows "Pic-quik" closed.

Ladies need the "Pic-quik" Coat Rail—particularly for keeping those dainty, easily-damaged frocks safe from harm—just as much as menfolk.

FOUR SCREWS FIX IT.

Prices (Nickel-plated or Oxydised-Copper finish):

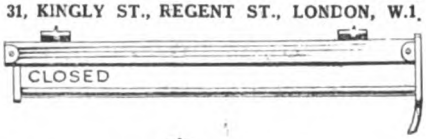
12 inch - **10/6** | 16 inch - **12/6**
14 inch - **11/6** | 18 inch - **13/6**

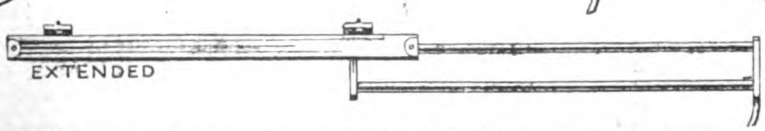
Size denotes minimum depth required in wardrobe. Postage:—12 in. and 14 in., 6d.; 16 in. and 18 in., 9d. Colonial Postage—all sizes—2/-.

Obtainable from House Furnishers, Ironmongers and Stores—or direct from the sole manufacturers:—

EVERITT'S PATENTS COMPANY,
31, KINGLY ST., REGENT ST., LONDON, W.1.

Fitted beneath a shelf, a "Pic-quik" makes a convenient wardrobe of an alcove or wall-recess.





ARE YOU GOING BALD?

Amazing Discovery of Hair-Growing Secret.

PROVED BY NEARLY 1,000 DOCTORS

32-pp. ILLUSTRATED BOOK FREE

If you are afraid of going bald, if your hair causes you the slightest anxiety, if it is dry and brittle, full of scurf or dandruff, if it is fading or falling out, even if you *are* bald, send a card at once for a free copy of an intensely interesting 32-page Illustrated Book about the startling hair-growing discovery that has caused such a sensation in medical circles.

So amazing has been the success of this new hair food, Humagsolan, that a special complimentary edition of its explanatory treatise has been prepared, and you should apply at once by letter or postcard to make sure of obtaining your free copy. It gives in clear, easy to understand language full details of the discovery that has revolutionised hair treatment. And it tells how Humagsolan has conquered hair troubles that have hitherto defied every form of treatment.

For years Scientists have known that all hair troubles come because the hair roots are starved of their proper nutriment. Dr. David Walsh, M.D., Edin., points out: "... Like all other tissues of the body, including teeth and bone, hair derives its nourishment from the blood."

You, probably, and most of the general public, do not know this, but the Medical Profession know it, and that is why

NEARLY A THOUSAND DOCTORS

and leading British Hospitals have endorsed Humagsolan, a wonderful new Hair Food that is made up in tablet form. It builds up from within the roots of the hair and positively makes hair grow. From the moment the treatment is commenced Humagsolan stops the hair from falling out, and it begins to grow stronger and thicker, bald patches disappear and natural vigorous growth is resumed. Humagsolan has been known to effect this wonderful change in the short space of a fortnight. Success can practically be guaranteed with one month's course of treatment. Many wise people who rejoice in good heads of hair take Humagsolan regularly to preserve its health. It will improve even the most beautiful hair.

If you have the slightest anxiety about your hair, if you are faced every morning with Nature's warning, do not delay! Send a letter or card for a special free copy of the intensely interesting 32-page illustrated book which embodies the whole of this interesting subject, together with sketches showing how hair grows, the position of the hair roots and how they function, etc. It also includes chapters on Hygiene of the hair, Your brush and comb, Scurf and dryness, Greasy Hair, Splitting Hair, Baldness, Nervous and Constitutional Troubles, Loss of Colour, Greyness, Alopecia, What the Doctors say, etc.

DO NOT DELAY—WRITE TO-DAY.

Do not hesitate to apply for a copy. It is sent to you **post free and implies no obligation on your part whatever.** If you care to state in confidence any particulars concerning the nature of your hair trouble, a personal letter of advice will be sent free of all obligation on your part.

Applications for this valuable Book should be addressed to: HUMAGSOLAN, LTD., 15F, Faraday House, 10, Charing Cross-road, London, W.C.2.

Perfectly brac·d with the 'Span' Bracer

Braces are becoming obsolete, they foster the stoop—are unsightly — uncomfortable — and last but not least are injurious. Don't continue the old-fashioned harmful method of bracing another day.

"SPAN"
PATENT
BRACER

is a simple elastic-sectioned adjustable half-belt. It is worn across the back of the trousers from hip to hip, and can be attached to any pair of trousers in 10 seconds by means of secure, self-fixing, threadless buttons, presented free with the article.

In order soon to have a MILLION MEN WEARING THE "SPAN" BRACER, and advertising its wonderful merits, Bracers Ltd. have decided to present, as a Christmas gift, to every reader of THE STRAND sending P.O. for a "SPAN" Bracer, a superfine quality Silk Knitted Tie, value 3/6.

A famous British General writes: "*Your 'SPAN' Bracers are excellent.*"

Supplied in Black and Grey for everyday wear, and Cream for sports. Complete with buttons and directions for attachment. Silk quality, **4/9.**

BRACERS Ltd. (Dept. S), Narrow Wine St., Bristol

A £2-2-0 Press for 6/6 POST FREE

Of Solid Wood and Metal, highly finished. With nickel-plated fittings —8/3 post free.

MAKES A SPLENDID XMAS GIFT.

HERE'S a press that gives a service of "trouser-neatness" similar to one at 2 guineas and at a fraction of the cost. It will make a splendid and useful gift to your friends, for it is as strong and enduring as the firmest of friendships.

Save Money—Dress Well.

Keep your trousers creased and pressed to make them last longer —and to give them that "just-from-the-tailor" look.

OUR MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE.

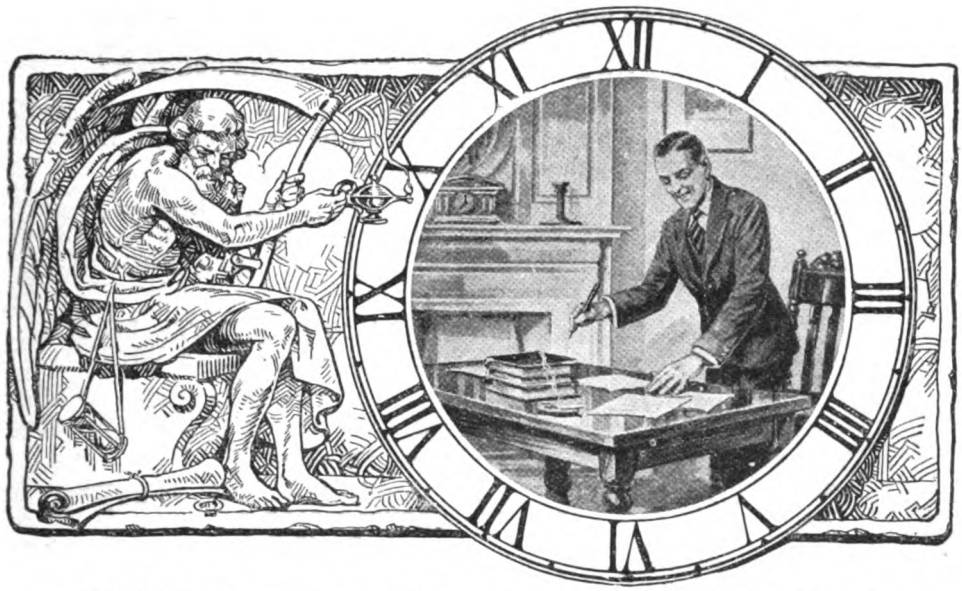
If not delighted full postage and cost refunded upon return of press in good condition.

SEND FOR list of other "COOPER-Val" lines.

The "COOPER-Val"

Compact; lightweight; packs in a suit case. Built to last years. Unlike any other press. Two thumb screws and patent grip give an even pressure and a knife-edge crease. Even if you already have a press you should send for this extraordinary bargain.

The COOPER COLLAPSIBLE BOX Co., Ltd. (Dept. D 2), CLARENDON WORKS, HULL.



HALF HOURS TOWARDS SUCCESS

FATHER TIME is on the side of the young business man and woman. Secure him as *your* ally by making the most of the quickly fleeting hours. Frequent half-hours, even, devoted to home spare-time study under the Metropolitan College, will suffice to treble or quadruple your commercial value—and there is no denying that in these competitive times, when keen firms can no longer afford to be swayed by influence or favoritism in their appointments, recognition and high remuneration go hand-in-hand with obvious business *worth*.

Anticipate good New Year resolutions by launching forthwith into preparations for a brilliant career: there is every advantage afforded by starting evening study *now*, with the full prospect of gaining valuable qualifications within a surprisingly few months.

SPECIALISED POSTAL TRAINING

in Secretaryship, Accountancy, Costing, Advertising, Insurance, Banking, Matriculation, for the University of London Degree of Bachelor of Commerce, etc.,

TAKEN AT HOME, IN SPARE TIME.

During the year ended June, 1923, more than 3,000 Successes, including 64 Honours, Prizes, etc., were gained by students of the College at the recognised professional Accountancy, Secretarial, Banking, and Insurance exams. alone.

Many intensely practical *non*-examination courses. ✣ Moderate fees, by instalments if desired.

WRITE TO-DAY FOR A COPY OF THE 140-PAGE FREE "GUIDE TO CAREERS," a handsomely produced and fully informative volume which is *free for the asking*—yours to *keep* without obligation.

METROPOLITAN COLLEGE, Dept S, ST. ALBANS.

DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES

These happy youngsters have no fewer than 7,306 brothers and sisters in Dr. Barnardo's Homes—the largest Family in the World.

And all these healthy, growing, little people need feeding and training to turn them into A1 Citizens of the Empire. 95,775 boys and girls have already been admitted.

30 ORPHAN AND DESTITUTE LITTLE ONES ADMITTED EVERY WEEK.

Will you help Barnardo's to bring the sunshine into thousands of sorrowful little lives this Christmastide, by sending

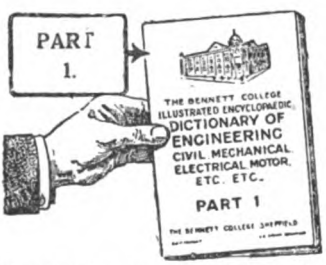
A CHRISTMAS GIFT?

10/-

will support one child for a week.

Cheques and Orders payable "Dr. Barnardo's Homes Food Fund," and crossed, may be addressed to the Honorary Treasurer, Howard Williams, Esq. (Dept. S.), 18-26, Stepney Causeway, London, E.1.

FREE



To extend the name of the Bennett College to everyone engaged in the different branches of Engineering, we are publishing an **Illustrated Dictionary of Engineering** in about **24 MONTHLY PARTS (16 pages each part)**. You can have each monthly part as it comes out, ***FREE.***

1/- Postage only to pay.

The Dictionary is free to those engaged in any of the following trades: *Engineering*, Civil, Mechanical, Electrical, Structural, Motor, Sanitary, Boiler, Internal Combustion, Draughtsmanship, Marine, Shipbuilding, Naval Architecture, Building, Architecture, Quantity Surveying, Aviation, Chemistry, Foundry Work, Metallurgy, Matriculation, Mining, Surveying and Levelling, Telegraphy, Telephony, Wireless, and the conditions are that you send your name and address, your age and occupation, with 1/- (to cover postage on the 24 parts), writing your name and address very clearly. We shall then place your name on our Free List and send you Part 1 at once. The others will be forwarded as issued. Address your application fully to:

(We teach the above trades by Post; particulars Free.)

Department D 6, The Bennett College, Sheffield.

EDISON BELL

Velvet Face RECORDS

Give you Tone Perfection. Free from harsh or foreign noises, V.F.'s mirror the work of the original artists.

10 inch, **3/6** — **TRY THESE SELECTIONS RECENTLY ISSUED:** — 12 inch, **5/6**

M. ZACHAREWITSCH (Violin) 10 *inch*
Waltz in A major (*Brahms*) and Rondino (*Beethoven*)... ... ... **1076**

ANDERSON TYRER (Piano) 10 *inch*
Nocturne, F sharp (*Chopin*) and Caprice (*Paganini-Liszt*) **1077**

LONDON LIGHT ORCHESTRA 10 *inch*
Fassepied (*Delibes*) and Bee's Wedding (*Mendelssohn*) **1078**

DALY'S THEATRE ORCHESTRA 12 *inch*
Merry Widow Selection (*Lehar*) Parts 1 & 2 **565**

BAND OF H.M. SCOTS GUARDS 12 *inch*
Zampa Overture (*Herold*) Parts 1 & 2 ... **560**

DORIS WOODALL (Contralto) 12 *inch*
Softly Awakes My Heart } "Samson and Delilah"
Fair Spring is Returning } (*C. Saint-Saens*) **561**

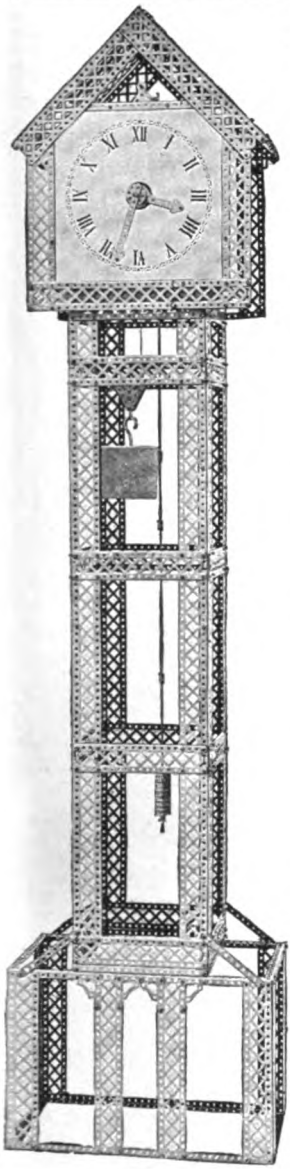
BARRINGTON HOOPER (Tenor) 12 *inch*
Eleanore (*Coleridge-Taylor and Mackay*)
O Mistress Mine & Blow, Blow Thou Winter Wind **563**

Use "Chromic" Needles on all your Records.

Ask your Dealer for Catalogue, or write to:—

J. E. HOUGH, Ltd., 62A, Glengall Rd., London, S.E.15.

SURFACE SMOOTH AS VELVET

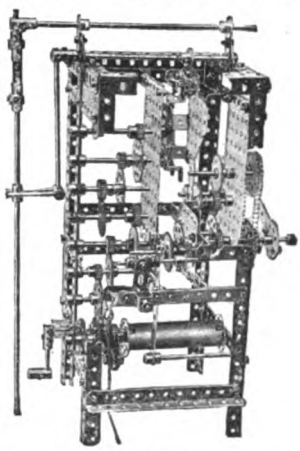


This clock stands 6 feet high, keeps perfect time and is made entirely of MECCANO

Anything that works may be built with Meccano. Here is proof in the form of a clock—that most delicate piece of mechanism—which keeps perfect time, and is made entirely of Meccano.

It stands 6 ft. in height and looks a realistic and beautiful structure. Look at the illustrations carefully. Note the ingenious "escapement" device, the pendulum, the gears all working correctly, each doing its work efficiently and smoothly.

This is only one of the hundreds of shining steel models that may be built with Meccano. Wouldn't your boy like to build such a Clock as this—or a fine steel Crane—a Tower—a Bridge, or anything he likes? Give him Meccano this Christmas.



GRAND PRIZE CONTEST

This is a Model-Building Competition that brings splendid opportunities to brainy, inventive boys. This year we offer splendid Cups and Medals to the value of **£250** for the best Meccano models. Write to us for full particulars, or ask your dealer for an entry form.

MECCANO

FREE TO BOYS

A splendid New Meccano Book

This is a new and splendidly illustrated book which tells of all the good things that come from Meccano-land, where the best toys are manufactured. No boy should be without this wonderful book.

How to get a Free Copy.

Just show this advertisement to three chums and send us their names and addresses with your own. Put No. 6 after your name for reference.

Meccano Prices:

No. 00 Outfit	... ...	3/6
No. 0 ,,	... ...	5/-
No. 1 ,,	... ...	8/6
No. 2 ,,	... ...	15/-
No. 3 ,,	... ...	22/6
No. 4 ,,	... ...	40/-
No 5 ,,	... (Carton)	55/-
No 5 ,,	(Oak Cabinet)	85/-
No. 6 ,,	... (Carton)	105/-
No. 6 ,,	(Oak Cabinet)	140/-
No 7 ,,	... ...	370/-

(Oak Cabinet with lock and key)

MECCANO LTD., BINNS ROAD, LIVERPOOL

8 More Uses in the Home

In addition to the lasting brilliance it gives to furniture and all woodwork

O-Cedar Polish

also brightens linoleum, cleans mirrors and prevents fly-marks, is splendid for lacquer work, renovates white enamel, cleans brass work and marble, preserves the brilliancy of silver and all polished metal. Sprinkled on the O-Cedar Polish Mop, it makes floor cleaning, dusting, and polishing one easy operation. Buy them to-day — Polish, 1/3 to 12/6; Mops, 3/6, 4/9 and 5/9 —on sale everywhere.

The Channell Chemical Co., Ltd., Slough, Bucks.

Send for Post Free Sample of the new

O-Cedar WAX

BRITISH MADE

ALWAYS SAY O-CEDAR

GRANT'S MORELLA CHERRY BRANDY

SOLD IN BOTS. & ½-BOTS. IN TWO QUALITIES—

SPORTSMAN'S (Dry), QUEEN'S (Sweet).

For more than a century Grant's Morella Cherry Brandy has enjoyed a world-wide fame, and connoisseurs acknowledge that this delicious combination of fine old Brandy and the matured juice of the English Morella Cherry is still pre-eminent amongst all the world's liqueurs. It gives new life, new strength, new joy to all who drink it. Therefore, ask for Grant's Morella, and take no other.

WELCOME ALWAYS, KEEP IT HANDY, GRANT'S MORELLA CHERRY BRANDY.

From all leading Wine Merchants, Hotels, Restaurants, etc.

The Distillery, Maidstone.

POTTERYLAND'S GREAT OFFER
— OF —
FAMOUS BARNFIELD WARE,

The "Oxford" Services in lovely shade of Canton Blue in thin semi-Porcelain. Design here shown.

We have been selling China to the public for over 22 years, and we have shoals of testimonials from all parts of the world. We are making A SPECIAL REDUCTION in price:—

Crate No. 1
COMPLETE LOT,
Packed Free **39/6** Carriage Paid

DINNER SET for 6 persons
TEA SET ,, 6 ,,
Tea Set finished in best English Gold.

Crate No. 2
COMPLETE LOT,
Packed Free **56/-** Carriage Paid
Safe Delivery Guaranteed.

DINNER SET 6 persons
TEA SET 6 ,,
BREAKFAST SET 6 ,,
Tea and Breakfast Sets finished in best English Gold.

TEAPOT and Stand to match above	4/-
COVERED JUG and Stand	4/-
DINNER SET for 12 persons	43/6
With Soup Tureen and Soup Plates	69/9
TEA SET for 12 persons, Gold finished	21/9

Money instantly returned if not approved.

Write now for Art Pottery Album, illustrated in colours and gold, showing Tea, Dinner, Toilet Sets, Glass Suites, Fireproof Ware, Cutlery, etc., etc., with **Legend of the Willow Pattern Plate** (8 pages), a fascinating story, **Post Free.**

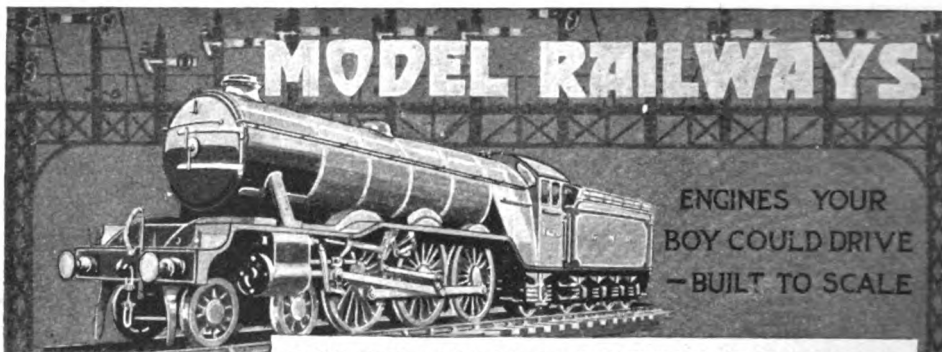
Hotels, Public Institutions, Works' Canteens, Sunday Schools, etc., Badge & Crest Ware supplied.

Bankers: BARCLAYS BANK, Ltd.

Goods shipped to all parts of the world, well packed by experienced packers.

MATCHINGS SUPPLIED.

THE FENTON POTTERY CO.,
Royal Fenton Works,
FENTON, S.O.T.,
Staffordshire Potteries.



YOUR BOY could drive a BASSETT-LOWKE Model Locomotive, could manage a BASSETT-LOWKE Model Railway.

If you want a Model Locomotive, Model Engine, Sailing or Power Boat, be sure you get a **GENUINE BASSETT-LOWKE** one, and you will be certain of having a **REAL SCALE MODEL,** that may be depended upon to work properly and well.

OUR NEW CHRISTMAS CATALOGUE

containing Hundreds of Illustrations of all kinds of Model Locomotives, Coaches, Wagons, Signals, in fact, EVERYTHING for a Complete Model Railway.

SEND FOR IT TO-DAY. Section A/11, Post free, 1s., from NORTHAMPTON.

ABRIDGED LIST gratis and post free on receipt of postcard.

BASSETT-LOWKE LTD. NORTHAMPTON

LONDON BRANCH: 112, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.1. EDINBURGH BRANCH: 1, FREDERICK STREET

Meet Me at GAMAGES

Great Xmas Bazaar

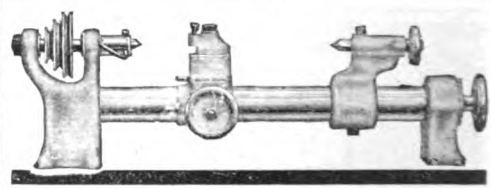
Let me show you round the most wonderful ENCHANTED CASTLE ever erected in the world's TOYLAND. Bring the little folks with you—give them the treat of their young lives.

GIFTS FOR ALL

If unable to come to London, write for the Gorgeous Bazaar CATALOGUE post free.

How to reach GAMAGES

Book underground to Chancery Lane (Central London) or Farringdon St. (Met.). Over 20 'Bus Services pass Doors from all parts. 2 mins.' walk M.E.T. and L.C.C. Trams (Gray's Inn Rd. Terminus, Holborn).



Handymen! Get this Wade lathe and make every job a better job

as illustrated £2 10s.

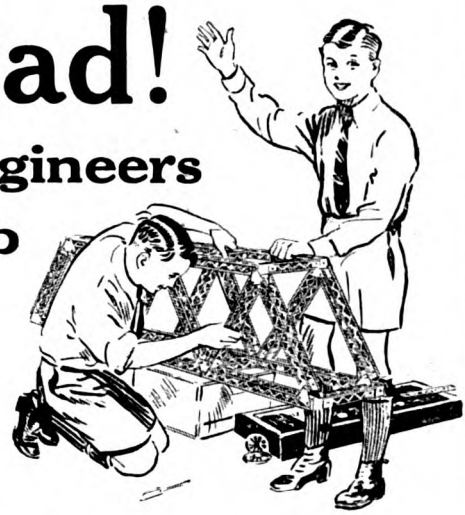
Many of those little jobs and repairs that every handyman loves to do can be done quicker and better with the aid of a Wade Lathe. Takes up little space. British made, strong, inexpensive. Turns wood or metal up to twelve inches by four inches. Also suitable for boring, facing and drilling. A full range of accessories and tools supplied at low prices. Sold by all leading Tool Dealers.

Send for List W.14.

C.A.V. SMALL TOOLS LTD.,
181, Queen Victoria Street, LONDON, E.C.4

Look Dad!

We're the Engineers of this Job



And while building up this fine Erector bridge, we thought out lots of even better ideas to make with the same parts.

That's the best of Erector—the one Outfit builds:—**Sky-scrapers, Locomotives, Pit-head Gear, Waggons Draw-bridges, Cranes, Swing-bridges, Lifts, Round-abouts, Towers, Saw Mills, Mixers, &c.**—always stimulating the young engineer to invent something bigger and better than ever before.

Remember Erector is the *only* toy "like structural steel"; nothing else makes such realistic models. There are lattice girders, pulleys, flanged wheels, axles, angle irons, toothed wheels, plates, nuts and bolts—everything a young engineer wants. Real electric motors, too, in the bigger sets.

On sale at all Toy Shops—and large Stores. If you have any difficulty in obtaining Erector, write us for name of your nearest Agent. Send for copy of 1923 Boys' Engineering Book—FREE.

Give the Boys Erector this Christmas.

The famous No. 4 Erector with Motor.—This is the most popular Erector set. In addition to hundreds of parts it includes the famous Erector Electric Motor to operate Cranes, Drawbridges and Machinery Models. The No. 4 set contains wheels, shafting base plates, angle irons, pinions, pulleys, wheels, gear wheels, nuts, bolts and every necessary part to construct buildings, elevators, big girders. Extraordinary value, **21/-**.

PRICES OF ERECTOR SETS.

No. 000	...	**6d.**	No. 4	...	**21/-**
,, 0	...	**2/6**	,, 6	...	**35/-**
,, 1	...	**6/-**	,, 7	...	**50/-**
,, 2	...	**10/-**	,, 8	...	**95/-**
,, 3	...	**15/-**	,, 10	...	**147/-**

ERECTOR

"The Toy like Structural Steel."

THE A. C. GILBERT CO., 57, KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C.2.

FOOT'S ADJUSTABLE REST CHAIR.

The "BURLINGTON."

Automatic Adjustable Back.

(Patented)

An Ideal Easy Chair that can be instantly changed into a semi or full length couch.

Simply press a button and the back declines or automatically rises to any position. Release the button and the back is instantly locked. The sides open outwards, affording easy access and exit.

The Leg Rest is adjustable to various inclinations, and when not in use it slides under the seat.

CATALOGUE C3 OF ADJUSTABLE CHAIRS POST FREE.

J. FOOT & SON, Ltd., 171, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1.

A handsome and useful Xmas Gift

THE "DEX" UNIVERSAL LAMP

is an acquisition in any home where there is electric light. It makes a valued gift. It is a handy, efficient, thoroughly useful lamp, that can be used for reading, for piano or music stand, for the toilet table, etc., etc.

It stands, it clamps, it hangs, and it possesses this unique feature—it can be fixed by suction to any smooth surface, such as glass.

Nickel-plated; conducting cord winds up invisibly; light can be directed where required.

Price without bulb **18/6** post free U.K.

Money returned if not entirely satisfied.

H. FLEMING & CO., "THE PILLARS," HIGH STREET, DUNDEE.

Strop your Gillette type Blades with this new Stropper.

Shaving with a Gillette type razor has an added pleasure to the owner of a SINDIX Stropper. Even a new blade shaves better when stropped, and one blade will last for months. The two rollers, covered with the finest leather, move from right to left while revolving. This exactly reproduces the movement expert barbers use for their razors.

The Sindix Stropper is the only one that

"Strops like a Barber"

Contained in a handsome nickel case, the SINDIX is compact, durable, and ornamental. It will save its cost in the number of blades used and add new pleasure to the daily shave. Sent post paid for **12/6**, with our guarantee to refund your money if you are dissatisfied.

Sindix Ltd. Room 37, 5, John Street, Adelphi, London, W.C.2.

100 Cloth Patterns FREE

And particulars of Cloth and To-measure Suit Service for overseas men. Best British Pure Wool Cloths and first-grade tailoring direct by mail saves 30 to 50 per cent. Stylish London cut, smart, hard-wear Tweed, made to measure.

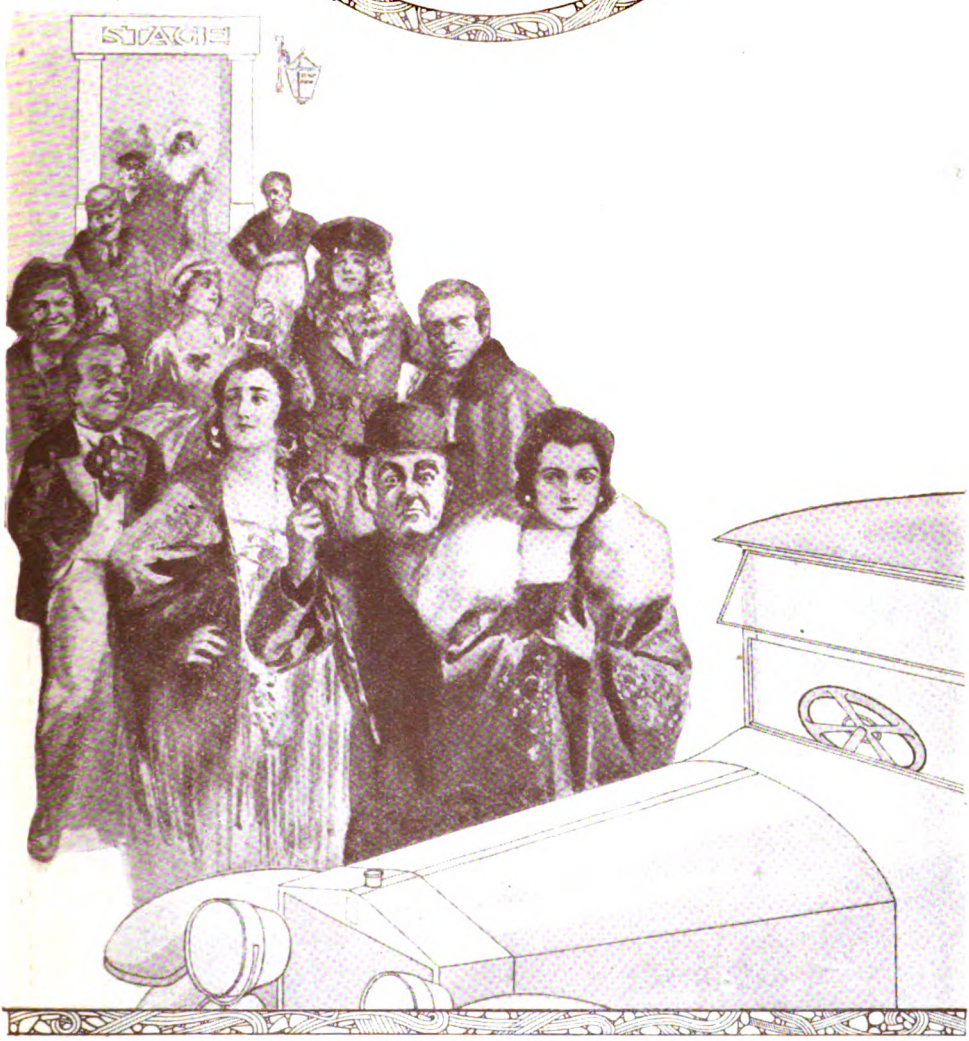
LOUNGE SUIT from 59/-

Cloth by the Yard. Scotch Tweeds, Huddersfield Solid Worsteds, British Pure Wool Tweeds, from 7/- the yard. Satisfaction guaranteed or cash returned. Write to-day for Free Cloth Patterns.

Groves & Lindley, *Merchant Tailors by Mail*, 114, The Lion, Huddersfield.

Behind the Scenes with Famous Players

With footnotes about their favourite products



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT CHRISTMAS 1923

"Down on the Farm"

To those who have only seen Miss José Collins in the glare of the footlights it will come as a surprise to learn that she is an ardent devotee of the simple life and takes her greatest delight in open-air recreation.

Below she is seen engaged in playful badinage with a bovine acquaintance who seems to be highly appreciative of the tit-bit which is being offered.

"I love the open air," says Miss José Collins, "but there is no doubt it *does* play havoc with one's skin and complexion. That, however, does not worry me much because I protect myself against the elements by the regular use of Pond's Vanishing Cream. So, I can laugh at wind and rain and come home from a long day in the open with my skin free from blemish. Then—a little gentle massage with Pond's Vanishing Cream—and I'm ready for the evening's work. After the theatre I have further thought for my complexion, which undergoes a minute's massage with Pond's Cold Cream. This, I find, keeps my skin supple; its properties as a cleanser are really remarkable."

José Collins

'TO SOOTHE & SMOOTH YOUR SKIN'

Both creams obtainable from all chemists and stores in opal jars at 1/3 and 2/6, and in collapsible tubes price 7½d. (hand-bag size) and 1/-.

Ponds Vanishing Cream

POND'S EXTRACT CO., 71, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.

THERE is probably no other actress who more intensely lives her parts than Miss Fay Compton, our foremost tragic actress. Whether playing the part of great mysticism as in "Mary Rose" or of frank melodrama as Princess Flavia in "The Prisoner of Zenda" she sinks her own individuality in that of the character she portrays.

Such conscientious work naturally takes toll of health and energy and the famous actress confesses that behind the scenes she first seeks restful surroundings to recuperate. And surely, as our photograph shows, there could be no better spot than in her own delightful garden.

Nature's Restorer

"'Sleep—Nature's sweet restorer'—nobody can so much appreciate the words than the actor or actress whose work at unnatural times and under unnatural conditions saps the energy and upsets the nerves so that sleeplessness oft comes.

"On many occasions the strain of playing a part has for me brought insomnia in its train, and health and good spirits have suffered in consequence.

"But fortunately the discovery of the beneficent properties of 'Ovaltine' has saved the day.

"For restoration and recuperation, for putting right unbalanced nerves, and for the preservation of general health there is nothing in my experience so effective as a nightcap cup of 'Ovaltine.'"

"Ovaltine"—the delicious Tonic Food Beverage—supplies concentrated nourishment in an easily digested form. Sold by all Chemists at ***1/6, 2/6,*** *and* ***4/6*** *per tin.*

Fay Compton.

A Christmas Pastime.

"Do you mind waiting a few moments," said Miss Violet Vanbrugh. "You see I'm just choosing Christmas Presents. This seems to have been my sole hobby for several weeks lately.

"But I've nearly settled everything now. There are just two friends to choose for. Dear, dear, I don't know what to buy for them!

"Stay! Boots Christmas Gifts—the very thing. This lovely crocodile sabretasche bag. Isn't it attractive? Look at the purse, and the mirror, and the puff — why, it's full of dainty things. Diana will adore it. And for Blanche? Why, yes, she is very fond of that entrancing perfume Grekis. So am I. Two bottles please. One for Blanche and one for me. Splendid! the Christmas presents are all ordered."

Violet Vanbrugh

Best hard-grain morocco hand-bag; Registered design; lined with striped moire poplin, with deep tuck pocket in back for Treasury Notes; fitted with captive purse, memo. tablet and pencil, mirror and puff; inside purse division lined white kid. Absolutely the finest quality **21/-** bag ever offered to the public.

A classic in Perfumes and an ideal Christmas Gift.
Captivating and entrancing, with a refined delicate, clinging fragrance of unusual attractiveness and charm, Parfum Grekis adds yet another enthralling acquisition to the armoury of beauty. **4/6** per bottle.

"Magda" at Home

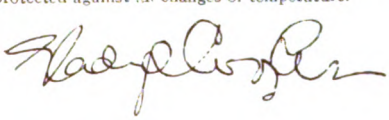
NO actress of the English stage has added more to her reputation during the present year than Miss Gladys Cooper. Her reading of the title-role of "Magda" ranked with the greatest of its past exponents.

Behind the scenes this famous player seeks restful recuperation from the tense atmosphere of her work in the society of her two charming children, Joan and John. A devoted mother, she spends as long periods of retirement as the public demands upon her art will allow, at her old-world country house in Surrey.

A Mother's Choice.

"How revolutionary are the changes which have come about in children's clothing even in the last few years. Once we used to 'muffle up' the youngsters with an overbearing burden of garments. Now we dress them *lightly* but warmly and securely against all winter risks in the pure wool of 'Chilprufe.'

"My own children delight in 'Chilprufe.' They like the snug feel of it and the freedom it gives them. I like the sense of security it gives me—the peace of mind in knowing they are adequately protected against all changes of temperature."



CHILPRUFE for CHILDREN

Whether it be a tiny babe, or lusty children, the Chilprufe range provides just the garments to keep them snug and warm during the long winter months.

THE NEW CHILPRUFE CATALOGUE IS NOW READY. Ask your draper for a copy. It is charmingly illustrated, and gives full information, sizes and prices of Chilprufe.

If unable to obtain Chilprufe, write, addressed to the Firm, for name of nearest Agent.

THE CHILPRUFE MANUFACTURING CO.
(John A. Bolton, M.I.H., Proprietor), LEICESTER.

PAINTING COMPETITION

Cash Prizes every month. A Beautiful Coloured Bouncing Ball given to all painstaking competitors.

Your Draper can supply the Books, 4*d*. each.

THE "STRAND" man caught Miss Dorothy Dickson in the act of performing that feminine duty which can be invested with so much charm—presiding at 4 o'clock tea. She confesses to a greater than ordinary liking for the delights of the tea-cup—but is very definite in her choice of blend.

"'Mazawattee Tea' is the tea for me," says Miss Dickson. "I know of no other tea so delicious and so consistently good. The quality never varies and it is always the best. I am fully in agreement with the modern poet who has sung its praises thus:—

"'Mid pleasures and palaces though we may roam,
Be it ever so humble there's no place like home.
The picture of home with the table just laid,
The sugar, the cream, and the tea freshly made,
Is wholly delightful, as you will agree,
If choice Mazawattee is our choice in tea."

Dorothy Dickson

MAZAWATTEE TEA

-and that's that

The Prime Minister of Mirth doesn't seem over pleased with the result of his labours, and even without the immortal eyebrows his discontent is very plainly expressed.

However—Mr. George Robey is an enthusiastic gardener in his spare moments, and the amount of work he manages to put in at his delightful country home is surprising considering the many public duties he performs in addition to his work on the stage.

Here's wishing him a bumper crop in everything he undertakes!

A Complaint about Dri-ped

"Somebody has said that whoever labours on the land needs a 'cast-iron back with a hinge in it.' True—but I'll add to these requirements 'a pair of boots that defy cold and damp'—not only for gardeners and such misguided folk, but for all who have to brave the mud, slush and rain of our awful clime.

"I'm fond of my feet—and I give 'em a fair chance by protecting them with 'Dri-ped' soles. I've only one complaint about 'Dri-ped' soles—*they won't wear out*, and it seems almost criminal to discard them when the uppers 'give up the ghost.'"

George Robey

CAUTION.

Firmly refuse all substitutes. Look for the "Dri-ped" purple diamond stamped every few inches on each sole.

DRI-PED
REG^D

THE SUPER LEATHER FOR SOLES.

Odd Jobs

"To be perfectly frank," said Miss Beatrice Lillie, "I have a secret vice. I love doing odd jobs—pottering about the place and doing things for myself. I am sure I was meant to be a 'handyman.' If somebody else is doing something in the house my fingers simply tingle to help. Even if it's the painters in!

"I spend hours trimming hats and renovating dresses—and do you know—I'm an absolute artist at dyeing.

"It's so easy when you know the way—all you have to do is buy a 'Drummer Dye' and the rest is as easy as A.B.C. No trouble; no fuss; nothing to go wrong and dozens and dozens of lovely shades to choose from."

Beatrice Lillie

Drummer Dyes are fast, fadeless, reliable and rapid. The complete process, including drying and ironing, takes only a few hours. You spend no more time Drummer Dyeing a jumper than you do when you wash it through, and the result is infinitely repaying.

Write for free booklet on Drummer Dyeing which gives fascinating details on dyeing with either Hot, Cold, or Boiling water, and hints on the art of colour mixing.

WILLIAM EDGE AND SONS, LIMITED, BOLTON.

THE 27 COLOURS:

MARY BLUE	TANGERINE	SHELL PINK
LIGHT BLUE	LIGHT GREEN	PINK
SAXE BLUE	EMERALD	OLD ROSE
ROYAL BLUE	DARK GREEN	PILLAR-BOX RED
NAVY	MYRTLE	HELIOTROPE
BLACK	RED	MAUVE
GREY	CARDINAL	DAFFODIL
BRACKEN BROWN		MAROON
BROWN		PURPLE
NIGGER		RUST

LUCKY flowers, to have so much of Ivy Tresmand's attention!

It seems that her strenuous stage life has in no way marred her enjoyment of simple hobbies, and that she takes just as great a pleasure in pruning and weeding as she does in delighting Daly audiences with trillings and dainty footwork.

The Fairest Flowers of Britain

Like so many of "the fairest flowers of Britain," Miss Tresmand has no time for "fancy" toilet preparations with high-sounding names and prices in proportion. "What Wright's Coal Tar Soap can't do to keep my skin and complexion clear," she says, "nothing else can. Its refreshing, healthy smell is infinitely more pleasing to me than the sickly scent of the majority of soaps, and I would no more be without 'Wright's' in my dressing-room for after-the-show use than I would in my bathroom at home.

"Do you know," she added laughingly, "I've even started a USE MORE WRIGHT'S campaign! I've persuaded all my friends to try it—knowing full well that a trial is practically *all* the battle of making them use it regularly. As for my nephews and nieces (who've about double the aversion of the average kiddies to water), they really relish being washed since I suggested to their nurse to get Wright's Coal Tar Soap."

Ivy Tresmand

WRIGHT'S COAL TAR SOAP

A Fascinating Hobby

MR. RUSSELL THORNDIKE, whose Character-Studies on both Stage and Screen have earned him a high place in the esteem of Playgoers, is an enthusiastic modeller in his spare time. He was busily engaged in creating one of an intriguing family of puppets when the "Strand Man" called at his interesting Studio.

"Wonderfully engrossing hobby is modelling," said Mr. Thorndike. "There's nothing more fascinating than taking up a shapeless mass of Plasticine like this and moulding it like this—and that—and that—and there you are.

"Excellent stuff this Plasticine. Much more pleasant than working with any other medium, and it gives a fine variety of colours. No wonder the youngsters love to play with it."

Russell Thorndike.

THE IMAGINATIVE CHILD

is the artist, the sculptor, the inventor, the writer, the scientist, the architect, the big business man of the future. But his ideas and fancies must have healthy active expression. Nothing tends more to this practical application of imagination than the use of **HARBUTT'S PLASTICINE**.

Care, judgment, foresight, these are only a few of the virtues that Plasticine play fosters.

Then there's the fun that all children get from **HARBUTT'S**—healthy, boyish fun that prevents morbid thoughts. Play, Education, and Character-building all at once—can any other game claim to combine all these?

Get a "COMPLETE MODELLER BOX" for a start—Post Free, 4/9—contains a variety of Colours —Tools and Directions—or the "DESIGNER BOX" with special cutters. Other Boxes from 1/- to £1 1s. from Toy Shops, Bazaars, etc. Full particulars from—

HARBUTT'S PLASTICINE, Ltd., 3, Bathampton, Bath.

"Reel" Life and Real Life

"Being Sherlock Holmes on screen and stage is a strenuous life," said Mr. Eille Norwood, "and I must confess that the quiet delights of home life are the main attractions of my leisure. As for hobbies—well, I play most games, but I find that constant study of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's famous character inclines me more and more to the practice of observation and deduction.

"There are so many little things that usually pass unnoticed that tell us so much of the romance of the lives that are being lived around us."

The Rexine Clue

"When I see a 'Rexine' covered arm chair," writes Mr. Eille Norwood, "it tells me that its owner is a man who appreciates beauty and loves solid comfort. He is a man of judgment too—a shrewd estimator of values, for I know from my own experience that while 'there's nothing like leather'—there's something *better* for upholstery—and it is 'Rexine.' It needs a very expert eye to detect the difference between 'Rexine' Leathercloth and leather—so close is the resemblance that most people are baffled."

Eille Norwood

"Rexine" LEATHERCLOTH

Your furnishing house can show you samples of the many and varied grains and colours. "Rexine" Leathercloth looks exactly like leather but costs considerably less. When buying, see that "Rexine" is specified on the invoice to prevent substitution.

REXINE LTD., REXINE WORKS,
HYDE - - - NR. MANCHESTER.
London: 42, Newgate Street, E.C.1.

At Her Best

"A sunlit lawn, a good opponent, a fast set—there's nothing I enjoy more," says winsome Edna Best.

"I simply adore tennis, and it's a wonderful game for keeping fit."

Britannic and Best

"A useful hint for your readers?" said Miss Edna Best—"Yes, here's one: Have you ever noticed how watch bracelets will give way at the most crucial moments of the day at work or play? My advice is, don't depend on any ordinary watch bracelet, but have your watch fitted with a 'Britannic' Expanding Bracelet. Then all the knocking about in the world will have no effect. I've never seen a bracelet so dainty and yet so strong as the 'Britannic.'"

Edna Best

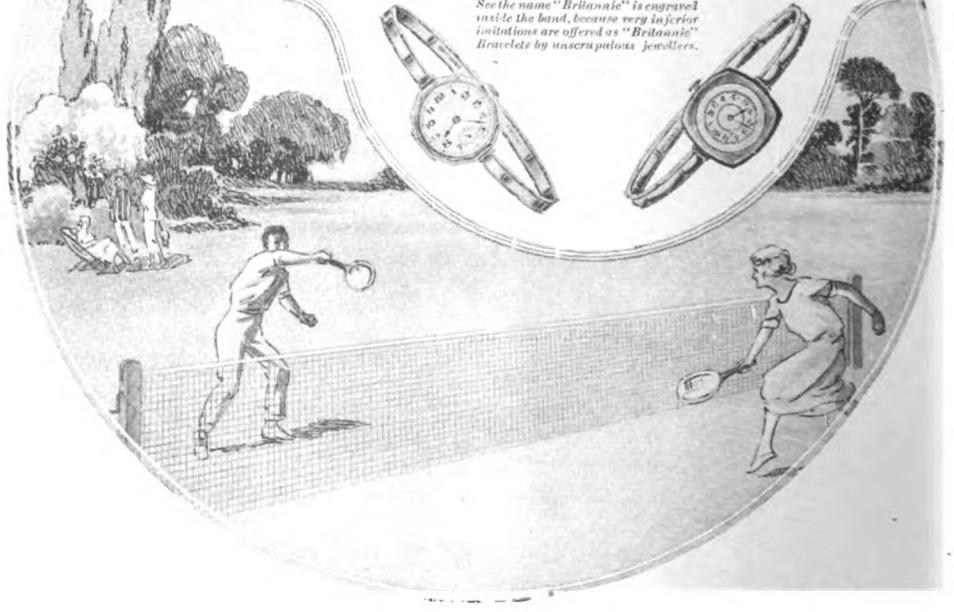
The Queen of Watch Bracelets

The "Britannic" Expanding Bracelet has made an unrivalled world-wide reputation for its durability and the charm of its various designs.

The springs will be renewed free of charge any time during five years, through any jeweller.

The "Britannic" may be seen at all good-class jewellers complete with watches in various styles from 5 gns. Also "Britannic" Expanding Bands alone with hooks, to replace straps.

See the name "Britannic" is engraved inside the band, because very inferior imitations are offered as "Britannic" Bracelets by unscrupulous jewellers.



In Fields of Fancy Free.

The "Strand" man coughed several times before he managed to get the attention of Miss Yvonne Arnaud. "Oh!" she exclaimed suddenly. "Ten thousand pardons—but you see what a bookworm I am. Books, books, books—they cost me 'Tons of Money,' but I never seem to satisfy my appetite for reading.

"What do you think of my new reading lamp? It's a Coleman Quick-lite. Electric light tries my eyes—and this is so soft and restful; I wouldn't be without it. It gives a lovely light and there's no nasty wick to trim and no messy smoke or soot. It's the kind of reading lamp I've been wanting for ages."

Yvonne Arnaud

Coleman Quick-Lite

***Most Brilliant** Light in the World*

IT MAKES COUNTRY HOMES AS LIGHT AS ANY IN TOWN.

Write for Illustrated Catalogue of this wonderful lamp.

COLEMAN QUICK-LITE Co., Ltd.
10, Electric Parade, Norwood,
LONDON, S.E.27.
140, Buchanan Street, GLASGOW.

Wanted

THE "Strand" man ran Alfred Lester to earth at his Club. But he wasn't his genial self. A cloud of depression hovered about him—and the "Strand" man trod warily.

And when the subject of hobbies was mentioned the popular Actor gave vent to his feelings. "Yes, I've got a fine hobby at the moment," he rapped out, "I'm looking *for a shoelace that won't break.*

"I had an early appointment this morning—was up with the lark—dressed, breakfasted, was ready to go out and then—pop! Just as I was putting on my shoes the blanketty lace broke. Not a spare lace in the place and it takes my man half-an-hour to get a pair. Result, two appointments broken. And the whole day messed up. Yes, you can take it from me. My present hobby is looking for an honest pair of laces."

Found

A few days later the "Strand" man received this note:—

"Dear Old Chappie,

Please pardon my bad temper of the day before yesterday—you know how galling a broken appointment can be. I've given up the hobby of searching for an honest shoe-lace. I've found some. They're called **Hurculaces**. They're as neat as any I know and they've got the stamina of a steel hawser. Try 'em yourself."

Yours sincerely,

Alfred Lester

Decide on getting **HURCULACES.** The Lace with the Extra Long Wear. Made in many varieties for Ladies', Men's, and Children's Boots and ordinary or Gibson Shoes in all popular shades. Hurculaces are obtainable from leading Boot Dealers, Drapers and Outfitters.

HURCULACES

The Lace with the extra long wear

Manufactured by FAIRE BROS & Co. Ltd. Leicester.

DRI-PED

DOUBLE WEAR SOLES AND
PHIT-EESI DOUBLE WEAR UPPERS
AT POPULAR PRICES MADE BY

ABBOTTS

21/-
Postage 9d.

No. 2. Real box-calf, light-weight Boot, made on the handsewn principle on a West End bespoke last. Will polish like Patent Leather. Soled with Genuine DRI-PED. Tan or Black. **21/-** **Postage 9d.**

No. 5. THE PHIT-EESI MOLIERE SHOE. Uppers cut from medium-weight selected leather to stand the extra wear of the DRI-PED Leather Soles. Welts extended round heels. Made in the hand-made way in black box-calf and tan willow (medium shade) calf. **25/-** **Postage 9d.**

25/-
Postage 9d.

Say 99

BOOTS & SHOES

A WINTER BOOT.

The uppers are cut from selected box-calf. They are calf-lined throughout. The soles are of Oak Bark tanned leather. The sealed welt renders this boot absolutely waterproof. **30/-** **Postage 9d.**

Tan and Black in Boots and Shoes, also DRI-PED SOLES if preferred.

For Overseas Orders take advantage of the Post Office Cash on Delivery purchasing facilities, or where this is not available you can safely send full amount, as we return all monies if you are not perfectly satisfied. OVERSEAS POSTAGE, **3**/-.

30/-
Postage 9d.

OUR 1924 ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE SENT POST FREE UPON REQUEST.

W. ABBOTT & SONS, LTD. (PHIT-EESI),

Post Dept.: **60, LUDGATE HILL, LONDON, E.C.**

Also on Sale at

121, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.
24, LIVERPOOL STREET, CITY.
121, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.
98, KENSINGTON HIGH STREET.
7, POULTRY, CITY.
434, STRAND, W.C. 2.
54, REGENT STREET, W.
239, BROMPTON ROAD.
458, HOLLOWAY ROAD, N.
166a, FENCHURCH STREET, E.C.
85, BUCKINGHAM PALACE ROAD.
131a, QUEEN'S ROAD, BAYSWATER.

LONDON.

It's not only what you cook on but what you cook in *that matters*

MONKEY BRAND turns on brightness as easily as you turn on the gas. Whether the pots be on or off the boil they will be *on the shine* all the time.

Monkey Brand is closely allied with GASTRONOMY, which is described as "the art or science of good eating; the art of good cheer." *Clean cooking* is the prelude to good eating and good cheer.

Monkey Brand is in bar form, economical and easy to use.

For cleaning and polishing all cooking utensils.

Makes
Copper like Gold,
Tin like Silver,
Paint like new.

WON'T WASH CLOTHES.

MONKEY BRAND

M 194—28

BENJAMIN BROOKE & COMPANY LIMITED.

Nature's Wonderful Triumph Over Illness

200,000 Cases Treated Successfully Without Medicine

About 60,000 of these were Ladies and Girls

SPECIAL OFFER OF ADVICE

To Out-of-Health Readers Wherever They Live

IT gives me the greatest pleasure to invite all who are suffering ill-health to learn without cost or obligation to themselves about the Natural Curative Physical Culture method of obtaining Perfect Health.

To-day the Science of Curative Physical Culture as conducted at the Institute bearing my name at 32, St. James' Street, London, S.W., is acclaimed as Nature's Own Method by the Medical Profession as well as by the leaders of thought in Science, Politics, and Religion.

The treatment which I recommend involves only a few minutes a day of simple light bodily movements, which can be undertaken at home, wherever you live, by the most delicate invalid lady, as well as by the strongest man who may have fallen out of condition, for my treatment is such that it is adapted in each case to the exact needs and strength or weakness of the sufferer

My advice to everyone is to read carefully the list of the treatises in the 'Sandow Health Library" If suffering from any of the troubles mentioned then come and see me at 32, St. James' Street, London, S.W., or write to me without delay, when I will forward free of cost the one most applicable in each case.

EUGEN SANDOW.

By EUGEN SANDOW,

The Great Exponent of the Nature Cure.

Mr. Eugen Sandow is celebrating the Silver Jubilee of his World-Famous Institute at 32, St. James' Street, London, S.W., for the Cure of Illness without Medicine by granting free Consultations Daily, between 11 and 1.30, and 3.30 and 5.30 (Saturdays 11 to 1). To those who cannot call, Mr. Sandow will Post Free a treatise specially dealing with the sufferer's complaint upon receiving the "Strand Magazine" Enrolling Form printed below.

THE VOICE OF THE MEDICAL PROFESSION.

More than 700 leading doctors recommend patients to consult and follow Mr. Sandow's advice.

THE VOICE OF "TRUTH."

AN HISTORIC CERTIFICATE

"We find that the Sandow Treatment has completely achieved the object for which it was undertaken in no fewer than 94 per cent. of cases and satisfactory improvement was produced in over 99 per cent. of cases."

THE VOICE OF PARLIAMENT.

Hundreds of Members of Parliament have adopted the Sandow Method of Health Without Medicine for their own and their families' good. A Cabinet Minister writes :—

"I consider you are doing a valuable work for the country in this period of reconstruction by calling attention to the needs of physical welfare as a basis of the wider well-being of the nation."

The Voice of Royalty, Nobility, The Churches, Universities, and Schools.

Gracious Messages of Appreciation of Mr. Sandow's Work have been received from seven Reigning Monarchs, Members of the Royal Family, Presidents of Republics, Archbishops, 31 Bishops, Leaders of Nobility, and the Heads of the Principal Universities and Schools throughout the world.

SEE IF YOUR TROUBLE IS MENTIONED BELOW

and Write To-day for a Free Copy of whichever of SANDOW'S GUIDES to PERFECT HEALTH deals with your complaint. These are the Treatises in Sandow's Health Library, one of which will be sent you Free on request, and beneath each is the Voice of one of the 200,000 successfully treated Sufferers.

INDIGESTION AND DYSPEPSIA.

Case No. A 32558. Mrs. L., South Coldfield, aged 30.

My head has been clearer than it has been for months—neuritis, too, very much better—my appetite is keen, and indigestion entirely disappeared. I sleep better and more soundly.

CONSTIPATION.

Case No. A 23285. Miss N. A., aged 30.

Thanks to your treatment the constipation I was suffering from has entirely disappeared. The most noticeable benefit I have derived is the great amount of energy I now possess. I can accomplish a great amount of work without fatigue.

LIVER TROUBLES.

Case No. BB 919. Lady aged 44.

I feel perfectly well in every respect. Thank you very much indeed for all you have done for me: my gratitude has and will be shown by telling others to go and do likewise.

LUNG AND CHEST COMPLAINTS.

Case No. AD 24112.

My chest has now improved wonderfully, causing my Doctor to remark on my changed appearance, having lost its flatness. My bowels are now moved regularly without the use of any aperient, the exercises now taking the desired effect. The Doctor said my lungs are splendid

NEURASTHENIA.

Case No. A 32647. Miss M. W. P., Aberdeen, aged 36.

I am very grateful to you for the careful way in which my lessons were compiled, for instead of the wreck I felt at the beginning of the course I now feel in splendid condition.

OBESITY.

Case No. 11927. Mrs. H., aged 40.

I have now lost a stone in weight. Exercise is becoming a pleasure to me, and I feel remarkably well.

INSOMNIA.

Case No. A 32057. Miss H. W., aged 43.

As a rule sleep is sound and refreshing. Am steadier now than I have been for many months.

HEART AFFECTIONS.

Case No. A 31961. Miss M. E. R., aged 34.

I feel the exercises have helped me enormously, the heart condition is very much better, and I do not get so breathless as I did on the slightest exertion.

ANÆMIA.

Case No. A 23465. Miss V. F., aged 23.

General health much improved. Appetite much better. Have more energy and strength. Altogether I feel better in every way than I have done for years, and all my friends remark how much better I am looking.

RHEUMATISM AND GOUT.

Case No. A 29340. Aged 55.

It is with much gratitude that I can really say that you have cured me of my complaint. I walk quite straight, no limping, and I have enjoyed myself this year more than I have done for the past 20 years.

LACK OF VIGOUR.

Case No. BB 694. Gentleman, aged 27.

I cannot tell you how much I have benefited from the exercises; I am now in perfect condition.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND FIGURE CULTURE.

Case No. 11438. Mr. R. G. C., aged 18.

I am more than satisfied. I have increased 6½in. round the chest, and my height has gone up 3½in.

PHYSICAL DEFORMITIES IN MEN. PHYSICAL DEFORMITIES IN WOMEN.

Case No. BB 053. Lady, aged 23.

Improvement maintained: the curvature at bottom of back gone, shoulders now level, general health splendid.

BOYS' AND GIRLS' HEALTH & AILMENTS.

Case No. 16605. Miss H., aged 11½.

Mother writes: "Very pleased with improvement in my little girl. Ankles stronger and straighter, she stands better, has more energy, not getting tired as she used to do, and even her memory is better."

FILL IN THIS FORM

and forward to-day for free copy of the Sandow Guide to Health and personal letter of advice on your case by Mr. Sandow.

Please send me your BOOK on.....

My OCCUPATION is..... .....My AGE is.....

NAME .....

(Please say Mr., Mrs., or Miss, or Title)

ADDRESS .....

.....

To EUGEN SANDOW, 32, St. James' St, London, S.W.1

STRAND MAGAZINE, *Dec.*

Every Lady will prize a "becoming" Otterburn

It is distinctive in character, generous in size and *fully* worth the moderate sum you pay for it . . . in fact it is one of the most "becoming" wraps a woman could wear.

As a Wintertime Wrap it is particularly suitable for those occasions when a Fur would not be appropriate. The "Otterburn" is so likeable, so genuinely cosy . . . it becomes a really chummy possession that you like more and more the longer you wear it. You only need to *see* an "Otterburn" to want to *possess* one and you could not do better than consider an "Otterburn" when thinking of Christmas gifts to your friends.

The Otterburn is the most useful wrap you could have for Motoring and all kinds of Winter Sports . . . it looks just right and for proved worth and wear its makers guarantee it. This is the Otterburn Guarantee:—If the Scarf you buy from us does not completely charm and satisfy you we return your money . . . in full. Otterburn Scarves are made from the finest Cheviot fleeces. Every bit pure new wool, carefully dyed, woven and finished, they wear and wear—and wash as well as they wear . . . they keep, too, their characterful appearance

Look for the little silk-woven Otterburn tab on every Woollie-wrap.

The Otterburn Woollie-wrap

Two sizes: 80" x 27", **19/11**; and 65" x 18", **3/3**
In addition to the two sizes mentioned above, there is a third and *smaller* size (60" x 10"): **6/11**) specially made for those who prefer the ordinary Scarf-size and following the same colour-schemes as the more generous sized wraps. Ask your Draper to show you the Otterburn Scarves . . . if you have any difficulty we will send one direct to any address, securely packed and post free, for price as above.

How to be *sure* of getting an "Otterburn."

Though many Drapers and other Ladies' Outfitters all over the country now stock Otterburn Scarves, it may happen that you are unable to buy one in *your* district. In this case, please write direct to Otterburn Mill, Ltd., for our descriptive Brochure.

The Brochure shows, in actual colours, the full range of twelve beautiful designs. It shows you, too, how to order *safely* through the post the particular "Otterburn" that will harmonise perfectly with *your* outdoor attire.

When ordering your Wrap direct from the Brochure, please give the name and address of the local Dealer from whom you would have purchased your "Otterburn"—had stocks been held.

OTTERBURN MILL, LTD.,
Otterburn Northumberland

Treasure Cot Company LTD.

The Treasure Cot is beautifully made in finest materials, Dainty, Cosy, Draught-Proof, Light, Washable Hammock. Folds up.

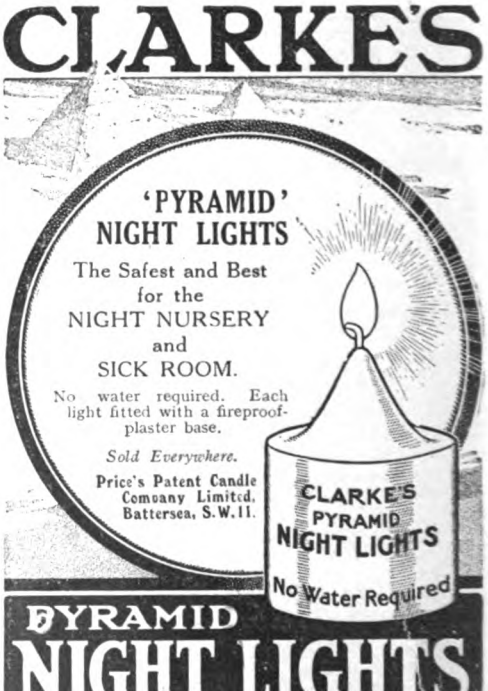
PRICES OF COTS (Undraped).

No. 0. Plain Wood **31/6** No. 2. W. Enamel **39/6**
No. 1. Polished **36/6** No. 20. 2nd Grade, Plain Wood **26/9**

WRITE FOR BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED CATALOGUE
"Everything for Baby." Free on request, in plain envelope.

TREASURE COT CO., LTD. (Dept. U.I.),
103, Oxford Street - - - LONDON, W.1.
Nearly opposite Bourne & Hollingsworth—First Floor (Lift).

CLARKE'S



PYRAMID NIGHT LIGHTS

Tranquillity

Rest is Nature's law of recuperation.

When any of the bodily functions break down, rest and repose are essential to recuperation. It is Nature's way of restoring and renewing normal health and strength.

At some time or other the need for *digestive rest* comes to everyone. It may be during the strain of student, professional, business or social life; during illness or convalescence; or when just "out of sorts." At such times, Benger's Food, which is distinguished from all other foods by its ease of digestion, is almost an essential to complete recovery.

BENGER'S Food

is a rich fund of nourishment in itself, is always made with fresh pure cows' milk, which it modifies with scientific exactness to the digestive powers of the individual.

Thus, whilst supplying abundantly all the food elements needed for repairing and rebuilding the bodily functions, it gives the digestive organs the partial rest and tranquillity which is the most potent factor in winning back vigorous health

Benger's Food is sold in Tins by Chemists, etc., everywhere
Prices—Size No. 0, 1/4; No. 1, 2/3; No. 2, 4/-; No. 3, 8 6

The Proprietors of Benger's Food issue a Booklet containing much valuable information on the feeding of Invalids and the Aged, and the rearing of Infants. A copy will be sent post free on application.

59b **BENGER'S FOOD, Ltd., —— Otter Works, —— MANCHESTER.**
NEW YORK (U.S.A.): 90, Beekman St. SYDNEY (N.S.W.): 117, Pitt St.

"Ever-Ready"
British Made
PORTABLE

ELECTRIC LAMPS & BATTERIES

THE Ever-Ready Series provide a Dry Battery article for each and every modern purpose and convenience; they are the acknowledged standards of the world for efficiency, reliability, finish and construction.

No. 61sp. HAND LAMP, Polished Walnut **19/-**
3-cell Refill Batteries, 1/6

No. 1912. WALL BRACKET LIGHT, **7/6**
3-cell Refill Batteries, 1/6

No. 1550. CYCLE LAMP, Nickel Plated, **8/6**
2-cell Refill Batteries, 1/-

No. 1817. POCKET LAMP, Flat Model, **3/6**
3-cell Refill Batteries, 1/-

ART CATALOGUE "F" FREE ON REQUEST

or call and inspect our showrooms:

THE PORTABLE ELECTRIC LIGHT Co., Ltd.
120, Shaftesbury Av. LONDON, W.1.

SNOWITE COLLARS

are always ready to wear.

NO STARCHING. NO LAUNDRY BILLS. NO FRAYED EDGES. Long wear. Smartness and Good Appearance ensured. Sample Collar, 1/3. Give size, style, and depth required. **LIST POST FREE** of Snowite Collars, Trio Oilskins, Nonwetto Waterproofs.

PARKER'S, Dept. S.M.2, LANCASTER.

He's got the job! —through us

And he says—"I will never forget the fatherly interest you took in me—the advice and training you gave me and the fine way you got me the job"—We do so want to help YOU too like this! We have very clever men on our Staff who are longing for the chance to show you the way to a successful career no matter what your age or education—Do write us now—All advice FREE.

DO YOU WANT

a position that will grow daily in its fascination? Do you want to start making more money than you ever thought possible? We have done exactly this for thousands of men—Here is the Book which gave them their start—Get it—FREE

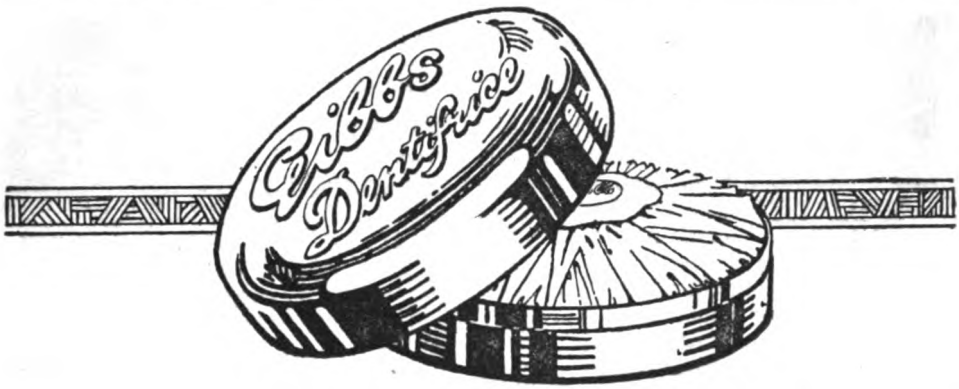
IMPORTANT

Every Engineer, Apprentice or Parent throughout the United Kingdom will find it to his advantage to immediately get into touch with the Technological Institute of Great Britain.

We train by post

You must state Subject when writing for Book.	Wireless	Electric Installations.	B.O.T. (Marine).
	A.M.I.E.E	Power House Design	Motor Starting and Lighting.
	A.M.I.A.E	Plumbing & Sanitary	Boiler Making.
	Telephony	Aeroplane Eng.	Electric Welding.
	Telegraphy.	Commercial Eng.	Heating & Ventilating
	Mechanical Eng.	Structural.	Survey and Levelling
	Electrical Eng.	Alternating Current.	Workshop Practice.
	Motor Car Eng	Shipbuilding	Machine Drawing.
	Mathematics.	Internal Combustion Engines.	Building Construction
	A.M.Inst.C.E.	Marine.	Civil Engineering.
	A.M.I.Mech.E.		

The Technological Institute of Gt. Britain,
15, THANET HOUSE, 231-232, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.



A Friend to Your Teeth

Light and colour reflected from the myriad tiny facets on the enamel surface give that exquisite lustre which is the charm of sound teeth.

By virtue of the exact degree of firmness to which its polishing agent is adjusted and of the lubricant quality of its mildly antiseptic saponaceous base, Gibbs Dentifrice neutralises and washes away all food deposits and impurities on the tooth surfaces and crevices, and puts a high, even polish on the enamel without the slightest risk to the delicate light facets. Leading British Dental Authority endorse these facts.

Preserve the sparkle of sound teeth and the glow of health it conduces by using Gibbs Dentifrice twice a day.

Gibbs Dentifrice is a solid pink cake packed in a neat aluminium case, from which it cannot spill or squeeze out. Its delightfully fragrant foam refreshes the mouth and sweetens the breath. You can buy many more expensive Dentifrices—but you cannot buy better than Gibbs

Your teeth are Ivory Castles—defend them with

Gibbs Dentifrice

Large size 1/-. Refills for above 11d. *De Luxe 1/6.* *Popular Size 7½d. Tubes 6d. & 1/-*

free! **GIBBS NEW FAIRY BOOK & SAMPLE OF GIBBS DENTIFRICE**

POST THIS COUPON TO-DAY

D. & W. GIBBS, Ltd. (Dept. 57BE), Cold Cream Soap Works, London, E.1.

I enclose 3d. in stamps to cover cost of postage and packing. Please send me FREE copy of the "FORTRESS OF IVORY CASTLES" and sample of Gibbs Dentifrice.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

GILBERT FRANKAU
Who wrote "Peter Jackson."

JOURNALISM & STORY WRITING AS A HOBBY——AND A CAREER

JOURNALISM and Fiction present one of the most remarkable developments of modern times. Few professions to-day offer such unlimited opportunities. Every day new papers and magazines are making their appearance and widening the market.

If you have any desire to write, you probably have latent literary ability. Why not take full advantage of it by availing yourself of skilled and specialised training?

The A.B.C. Writer's Course is framed on entirely practical lines, and *actually shows you how* to construct stories and articles; *what* to do with them in order to sell them, and what the best markets are *to-day*.

Contributors to the Course include:—

Sir Philip Gibbs (Author of "Adventures in Journalism," &c.).

Gilbert Frankau (Author of "Peter Jackson," &c.).

Stacy Aumonier (Author of "The Love-a-Duck," "Miss Bracegirdle and Others," etc.).

Elinor Mordaunt (Author of "The Little Soul").

"Sapper" (Author of "Bull-dog Drummond").

H. de Vere Stacpoole (Author of "The Blue Lagoon," &c.).

And Others.

SOME *RECENT* TRIBUTES *from* SUCCESSFUL PUPILS

"Many thanks for your corrections of Lesson VI. and the criticism of the article I forwarded to you. I am sure you will be pleased to hear it was accepted by 'The Morning Post,' and I received a generous remuneration of £4 4s. for it (1,200 words). . . . I feel I owe a great deal to your advice and criticism."—O. L. P., 6/5/23.

"I am sending you a few small stories I have written. 'The Evening Standard' has accepted three of those I sent before."—J. G. W., 15/7/1923.

"I heard from the Editor of 'Cassell's Weekly' that he had kept the MS. I had sent him, and which the Chief Instructor had corrected."—K. D. M., 20/8/1923.

STACY AUMONIER
The world-renowned short-story writer.

MSS. CRITICISED FREE.

We are prepared to criticise one MS. (up to 5,000 words—article or short story) free of charge. All MSS. will be returned with a candid, constructive criticism within a few days. We shall tell you honestly what we think there is in your work. MSS. should be addressed to the Secretary, Dept. 241, A.B.C. Writer's Course, marked "Special Criticism."

Even if you do not send us a MS., let us post you a copy of our booklet, "Word-craft," which will be sent free on request.

THE A.B.C. WRITER'S COURSE (Dept. 241), 34, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4.

The Cambridge Correspondence College.

Principal: Rev. R. O. DAVIES, M.A., LL.D., D.C.L., D.D.

THE CAMBRIDGE CORRESPONDENCE COLLEGE, conducted entirely by University Graduates with a wide experience of educational methods, provides Tuition at once attractive and thorough. Although Postal the Tuition is specifically personal; the Tutor and the Student get into closer relations of sympathy and interest than is possible in a large Class, or at Lectures. The Fees are moderate and, if preferred, can be paid by instalments.

The Courses of the College include:—

LONDON MATRICULATION
ENGLISH — **LATIN**
ARITHMETIC — **ECONOMICS**
GREEK — **FRENCH**
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Extracts from Students' letters (originals can be seen):—

"I have enjoyed working the papers very much, and wish to place on record my appreciation of the tuition I have received. It was exactly what I required and I have gained considerable benefit."

"We are very grateful to you for the kind consideration and interest with which you have helped us in our study; your remarks are always helpful and encouraging."

"I am pleased to note that there is no time limit to the Courses. I think they are splendid and I am enjoying them."

Full particulars of the Courses on any of the above Subjects can be obtained on application; write, *mentioning the subjects* regarding which you require information, to:—

The Secretary, *C. Stringer, M.A.*

The Cambridge Correspondence College, Ltd.,
3, Doughty House, Doughty Street, London, W.C.1

Modern Pictures by **SUZANNE MEUNIER** and other FRENCH ARTISTS

LIBRAIRE de L'ESTAMPE,
21, RUE JOUBERT, PARIS.
Enquiries Invited.

SHAVING SIMPLIFIED

Read our latest booklet (sent free on request) and learn how you can get a *clean*, *quick*, and *safe* shave in 3 minutes.

The "MAB" is undoubtedly the easiest shaving instrument made. No matter how tough your beard, a "MAB" will remove it with a minimum of trouble.

Finest Sheffield Steel.

PRICES:
DWARF SIZE 4/6
MEDIUM 5/6

Pairs in Case—Black. 12/6 & 14/6; Ivory, 20/6 & 22/6
The "MAB" Shaving Outfit complete, 30/-
Of all Cutlers, etc., or post free from—
MAB CO., 73A, Newhall Street, BIRMINGHAM.

B.L.
GOLD LABEL
Scotch Whisky
15/- per bottle
Pre-War Quality &
Strength: 25 u.p.

A whisky of fine character for the occasions of old-fashioned friendly hospitality.

BULLOCH, LADE & COMPANY
GLASGOW. Sole Proprietor: Duncan MacLeod. LONDON.

GOOD Light Radiates Cheerfulness

HOLOPHANE FILTERLITE.

On the other hand, poor illumination causes discomfort and discontent—and is never economical in the long run. Whether it be for a Town or Country House, Hotel, Club, Restaurant or Library, the most satisfactory way of obtaining efficient illumination is by installing the scientifically designed Holophane Units.

For lighting large rooms and spaces effectively, the **HOLOPHANE FILTERLITE** is recommended. This is **a new development in the control of light** and is dustproof. Correct refraction and diffusion ensures that a good, soft, even light is thrown wherever required, without waste, shadow or glare.

Holophane for Scientific Illumination

The Holophane Lighting Service covers a unique organisation based on 30 years' experience in solving lighting problems of every description.
The Holophane illumination specialists are always at the disposal of all interested in efficient lighting. They will prepare specifications, or offer advice as to how existing fittings may be adapted to give better results—*absolutely free of obligation*, and they usually enable economies to be effected in the lighting bill.

The Holophane Lighting Service is applicable to all forms of artificial illumination and for all types of Units.
Any Lighting Contractor will obtain for you, *free of charge*, specifications prepared by Holophane engineers and will submit estimates based thereon—or write direct for Brochure No. 42, explaining more fully the benefits to be obtained from Scientific Illumination by means of Holophane Filterlites and Holophane Units generally.

HOLOPHANE LTD., 42, Elverton Street, Vincent Square, London, S.W.1.

N.B.—See that the name Holophane appears on the unit purchased.

Every motorist should know about the Holophane Motor Lens.

The "CHALLENGE" Patent Curtain Runner

can be fitted by a boy. Improves the appearance of curtains in a striking fashion, and by stopping wear and tear greatly prolongs their life. Can be bent by hand to all corners and curves, and is suitable for light or heavy materials.

The only rustless steel runner on the market.

Write for fascinating free Runner Booklet "S."

The "CHALLENGE" Stair Carpet Clips

These Clips—"*The Clips with the Reinforced Grip*" are indispensable in a well-ordered home, and are so finished that cleaning is unnecessary.

Write for free Clip Booklet "S."

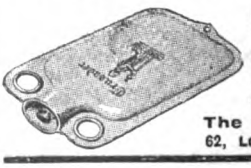
CHALCO, Ltd. (Dept. S)
Summer Row, Birmingham.

But he knows how cold the sheets were last night—and to-night it's even colder, so he's staying by the bright and cosy fire to the last late moment. To-morrow he'll feel the effects!

The "Crusader" Rubber Hot Water Bottle makes bed a place to hurry into gladly, sure of a warm welcome on the coldest of nights. It warms the bed and thaws the feet.

In the "Crusader" the neck and handles are built right into the body, and because there is only one seam (made under hydraulic pressure) there are no parts to break or come apart. Every bottle guaranteed 12 months.

The "Crusader" Rubber Hot Water Bottle



One Price only, whether purchased from your Store, Chemist, or Ironmonger. **6/11**

If unable to procure, please apply direct to (postage free)

The CRUSADER CO., Ltd.,
62, London Wall, London, E.C.2.

Telegrams: "GREATLY LONDON."

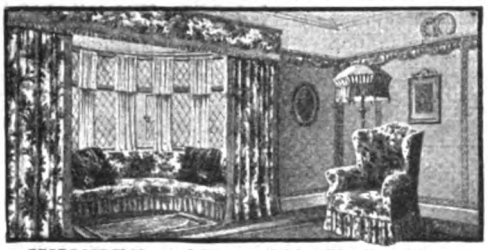
The Home Beautiful.

Telephone: BATTERSEA 300 (4 Lines).

FAMOUS FURNISHINGS

THE "BEAU-VELOUR" CURTAIN.

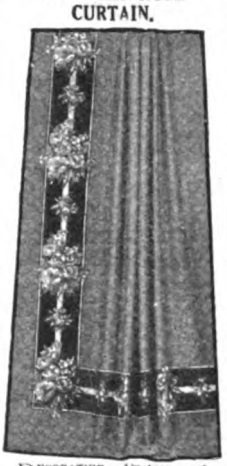
Of reversible Unfadable Velour, beautifully embroidered. Rich in effect. 3¼ yds. long, £5 19 6 per pair.



WINTER CURTAIN FABRICS.

TAPESTRIES from 3/11 per yd. **DAMASKS** from 5/9 per yd. **REPS** from 3/11½ per yd. **VELVETS** from 8/11 per yd **PLUSHETTE** from 4/9 per yd. **SERGES** from 1/11½ per yd. **BOLTON SHEETING** from 2/4½ per yd. **CRETONNES** from 1/0½ per yd. **SHADOW TISSUES AND TAFFETAS** from 2/9½ per yd. **CASEMENT CLOTHS** from 10½d. per yd.

THE "GLENROSE" CURTAIN.



DECORATIVE Curtain of Bolton Sheeting, with a dainty border in chintz colourings. 3½ yds. long, 35/- per pr.

THE "GRAFTON" SETTEE.
Luxuriously comfortable 5 ft. 6 in. Lounge, with two loose feather cushions. One end adjustable. As illustration, £13 19 6.

THE "LIBRARY" LOUNGE.

GOOD roomy comfortable Chair. Well sprung. Covered in Tapestry, as illustration. £4-19-6. The best value procurable.

Resist Tropical Sun — "Sunpruf" — Sea Air and Washing

UNFADABLE FABRICS

"SUN-VELOUR." A heavy reversible Curtain Fabric, 8 11 per yard, 50 ins. wide.
"SUN-GLEAM" REP. Good useful Curtain Fabric, in decorative colours, 7.3 per yard, 50 ins. wide.
"SUN-VIE" TWILL. Soft hanging fabric, 4.11 per yard, 50 ins. wide.
"SUN-BOURNE" TWILL. Excellent fabric, from 3.3 per yard, 50 ins. wide.
"SUN-VEIN" CASEMENT CLOTH, from 1/3½ to 3/11½ per yard.

THE "BEDFORD" CHAIR.

EXCEPTIONALLY comfortable Chair. Covered in plain Cotton, 75/- Or with Loose Cover, as illustration. £5 10s

Williamson & Cole LTD.

HIGH STREET, CLAPHAM S.W.4

NOSTROLINE

TRADE MARK REG'D

TAKE IT IN TIME.

Tish-oo—Tish-oo!!—that's a warning—you have breathed in a germ, and it must be killed at once if you are not to be in for a bad time. Get a tube of NOSTROLINE; place a little into your nostril and sniff it up into the head. Influenza germs and other disease germs do not like NOSTROLINE. That's why people who go into crowded places—trams, trains buses, picture palaces, etc.—carry NOSTROLINE, and use it lest they inhale some d sease germ from the contaminated air. Mother, use it for children going to school. Don't wait till too late—take the thing in time. Costs only 1/3. All chemists keep it, or can easily get it for you.

In case of delay send P.O. or Stamps, 1/5, to
NOSTROLINE LABORATORIES, 728 CLIFTON, BRISTOL.

NOSTROLINE
TRADE MARK REG'D

STANDARD CATALOGUE OF POSTAGE STAMPS

1924 EDITION NOW READY.
OVER 700 PAGES AND 5,500 ILLUSTRATIONS.
A L THE WORLD IN ONE VOLUME.
PRICE 6/6, POST FREE ANYWHERE.

A few copies of the 1921 edition remain on hand, which can be supplied at 2/- each, post free.

Write for our 100-page Price List of Sets, Variety Packets, Philatelic Accessories, and a great variety of Albums, together with a specimen copy of the "Philatelic Bulletin," sent free on request.

Whitfield King & Co., Ipswich.
ESTABLISHED 1869.

STAMPS BY WEIGHT.

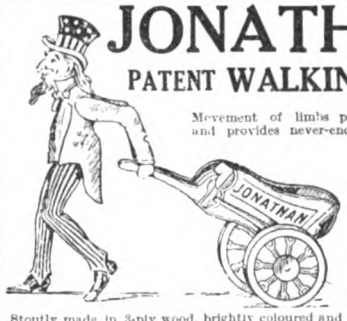
The cheapest way to start a stamp-collection is to buy some of our famous mixture of British, Colonial, and Foreign Stamps, sold by weight only at 2/6 per lb. (averaging about 5,000 stamps), or 2 lbs. for 5/-. Post Free in Great Britain; abroad extra according to destination. Superior quality mixture from a larger number of countries 7/6 per lb. We are open to buy for cash common used stamps from any part of the world on a weight basis. Send sample ¼lb., stating price required and quantity available. If preferred we will exchange weight for weight for the mixture as advertised above. Ask for a copy of our new and enlarged price list for 1924 of Stamps, Albums, and Accessories. To all applicants sending 3d. for this we will present, free of charge, a handsome set of unused Bavaria stamps.—
THE MIDLAND STAMP CO., LTD., 78, Warwick St., LEAMINGTON SPA.

There is Big Money in Stamps

Stamp Collecting and Dealing is a Fascinating Hobby it is also a very Paying Profession. For full particulars of the easiest, quickest, and cheapest means of becoming an Expert apply Dept. S.M.

ATKINSON & CO.,
1, LOWER BROOK ST., ULVERSTON, LANCS.

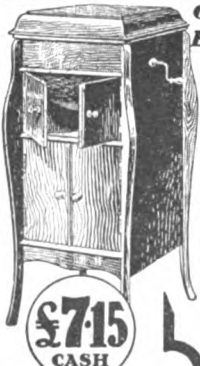
JONATHAN
PATENT WALKING TOY



Movement of limbs perfectly natural, and provides never-ending amusement.

3/9
POST FREE.

Stoutly made in 3-ply wood, brightly coloured and varnished, fitted together with metal cranks, and propelled by means of a stout rod. Fitted up ready for use and packed in attractive box. **Send P.O.**
HARPER TOY CO., 262, HOLLOWAY RD., N.7.



OUR EASY Credit Terms

and **WHOLESALE** *Factory* quotations enable you to buy an Upright-Grand Gramophone with beautifully polished Mahogany finish Cabinet 3-ft. 4-ins. high by 31-ins. wide

AT HALF SHOP PRICES

Double spring Motor, Aluminium Sound-Box, Nickelled Tone-Arm, 12-in Turntable, 2 Needle cups, Time Regulator, spacious Record Cupboard, massive Sound Magnifier, 2 Tone-Modulating Doors and Piano Hinged Dome. Carriage Paid. 10 days' free trial. Write for catalogue.

£7.15 CASH

Mead Company, (Dept. C90) Birmingham

Xmas Gift

TO STAMP COLLECTORS

Canada Xmas Stamp, Set German Charity 3 Liechtenstein (Madonna and Child); with **FREE** "NOEL" PACKET of 120 desirable stamps including German 5,000,000 Mk., N.Z. 6d. obs.; 6 Czecho-Slovak, C.E.F. mint, Hong Kong K.E., Jubilee mint, Bermuda ship, Polish officials, etc., etc. Exceptional value. **Post free 1/-.** *Ask for my "Better Approvals"—they will delight you.*

ALAN TURTON (Dept. A),
59 BISHOPSGATE, LONDON, E.C 2

STAMP COLLECTORS, LOOK!

20/- Worth of Stamps 1/6. Lot N206 contains 100 diff. stamps as follows:—25 Austria, 25 Germany, 25 Bavaria, 25 Hungary, 25 Poland, 25 Roumania, 25 Czecho-Slovakia, 15 Danzig (Cat. value over £1). **50/- Worth of Stamps 4/-.** Lot N206 B contains 250 diff. stamps as follows:—50 Austria, 50 Germany, 50 Bavaria, 50 Hungary, 50 Poland, 50 Roumania, 50 Czecho-Slovakia, 30 Danzig (Cat. value over 50/-) **£5 Worth of Stamps 7/-.** Lot N206 C contains 650 diff. stamps as follows:—100 Austria, 100 Germany, 100 Bavaria, 100 Hungary, 100 Poland and Lithuania, 50 Roumania, 50 Czecho-Slovakia, 50 Danzig (Cat. over £5). **SPECIAL OFFER!**—500 diff. 2/-, 1,000 for 6/-, 2,000 for £1.
BRIGHT & SON, 164, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.

STAMP BARGAINS

English 1d. Blacks from 1 - each.

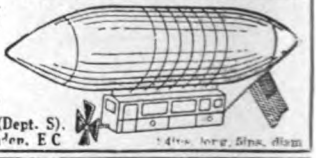
SETS.—Gold Coast, 6d., 1/-, 2/-, 2/6, 5/-, 10/- and £1; cancelled, 2/6 the 7; S Epirus, 4d.; 6 Kenya, 4d.; 12 Gold Coast, 1/-; 6 Fiji, 6d.; 10 Queensland, 6d.; 12 Victoria, 6d.; 20 New Zealand, 1/-; 15 Japan, 4d.; 3 British Nyassaland, 4d.; 12 Ceylon, 4d.; 12 Newfoundland, 1/-; 12 Cape of Good Hope, 1/-; 30 French Colonials, 9d.; 2 Falkland Isles, 3d.; 6 Bermuda, 5d.; 12 Barbados, 1/-; 6 Malta, 4d.; 6 Cyprus, 4d.; 12 Finland, 6d.
ALBUM and 500 Mixed Stamps, etc., 5/6—useful to beginner; Mounts 5d. a 1,000. **LISTS FREE.** Approval selections of stamps from ½d. each on request. Duplicates purchased or exchanged. Add postage.
A. E. WITHERICK, 12, Meriden Street, COVENTRY, Eng.

STAMP COLLECTORS!

I hold an extensive range of stamps of
BRITISH COLONIES and EUROPEAN COUNTRIES
which I can supply at one-third to half catalogue prices.
Selections sent on approval.
P. WARREN, 38, Langley Drive, Wanstead, LONDON, E.11.

THE GREAT AMERICAN DIRIGIBLE

Performs like a big one. Keeps children amused for hours.



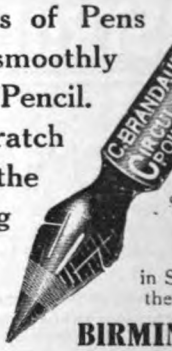
Two Sent Post Free 2/-
Three for 2/9; six for 5/-
C. HENRIQUES CO (Dept. S), 20, Bucklersbury, London, E.C
14-ins. long, 5½ins. diam.

"The Apple as a Drink"

Golden Pippin
CIDER-DE-LUXE

INTERESTING BOOKLET POST FREE.
WM. EVANS & CO., LTD. (Dept. S), Widemarsh, Hereford, and Hele, Devon.

These Series of Pens write as smoothly as a Lead Pencil. Neither Scratch nor Spurt, the Points being rounded by a Special Process.

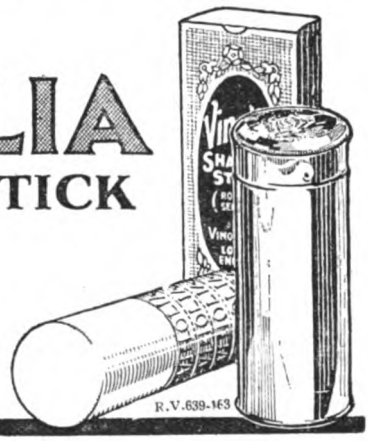


Assorted Sample Box
10½d.
in Stamps from the **Works,**
BIRMINGHAM

A lather like whipped cream

That's the lather VINOLIA gives—soft, soothing and prodigiously profuse. It never dries on the face, nor leaves a trace of after-soreness. VINOLIA is, therefore, indispensable if you want the very best kind of shave—quick, clean, and entirely comfortable.

VINOLIA SHAVING STICK



In aluminium cases - 1/3
Refills - - - - 1/-
Wedgwood shaving sticks 1/-
Premier - - - - 7½d.
Of all chemists and stores.

VINOLIA CO. LTD., LONDON.

R.V.639-163

Even if you write like this

Onoto the Pen Streamline Model, **21/-**

—there is an Onoto nib to suit your writing—a pen with just that breadth of point and flexibility which suits the natural pressure of your hand.

The nib is solid gold hardened to the right degree of fineness. The point of Osmi-iridium—more costly than gold—ensures a lifetime's wear.

Ask your Stationer or Jeweller to show you the Onoto and choose a nib to suit your hand.

Whenever you see a Pillar Box think of Onoto the Pen.

Onoto the Pen

SELF-FILLING SAFETY MODEL

THOMAS DE LA RUE & CO., LTD., 110, BUNHILL ROW, LONDON, **E.C.1**

The Practical Xmas Gift—a Globe-Wernicke "Elastic" Regd. Bookcase

Buy at the

REDUCED PRICES

What *could* be better than a BRITISH MADE Globe-Wernicke "Elastic" Bookcase? The recipient would treasure it for life. These Bookcases are world-famous for quality and fine finish. They contain only the best features in sectional construction and are

"ALWAYS COMPLETE BUT NEVER FINISHED."

Take advantage of the reduction in prices. Start your son or daughter with one or more Units. Additional Units to match can be had at any time.

Made in three Styles—Standard, Ideal, and Universal.

Send for Catalogue No. 6B, showing complete range and particulars of reduced prices.

BOOKCASE AS ABOVE.
Standard Style—Oak £6.5.0
Mahogany £8.6.0
Additional Oak Units from £1.8.6
Mahogany - - - from £1 18.0

The Globe-Wernicke Co. Ltd.
Office and Library Furnishers,
London: 44, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.1; 82, Victoria Street, S.W.1; 98, Bishopsgate, E.C.2.
Manchester: 13, Victoria Street.

LEARN TO WRITE
and
Earn while you Learn.

SHORT stories and articles are commanding big prices, and the demand for contributions is steadily growing. You can qualify under expert guidance to earn money by your pen, and to make your spare hours profitable. The Journalism Course of the Regent Institute will show you how to achieve success. In a series of clear, practical, and interesting lessons you will be taught how to write and what to write about, and helped to produce saleable work as soon as possible. The instruction will be personal to YOU, and from the very start you will enjoy the use of an Advisory Service. *The moderate fee (payable by instalments) is inclusive.* (Special arrangements are made for Overseas students.)

Interesting Booklet FREE

Write NOW for a free copy of "How to Succeed as a Writer," an interesting booklet which describes the openings for new writers, and the unique advantages of a postal course which is training men and women to write the kind of copy that editors want—and to earn while they learn.

THE REGENT INSTITUTE (Dept. 129N), 13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

LLOYD LOOM FURNITURE.

RENOWNED FOR BEAUTY OF DESIGN AND RICHNESS OF COLOURINGS.

It is Heat, Sunshine and Weather-proof.

THESE GOODS COMBINE
UTILITY
AND
GOOD TASTE
WITH
MODERATE COST.

Can be obtained in any colour at all good-class Stores.

Write for Illustrated Leaflet and name of nearest Agent to:—

W. LUSTY & SON,
(Dept. S), BROMLEY-BY-BOW, E.3.

DULCITONE
(Regd.)

For the Christmas Parties

Get a Dulcitone for the Christmas festivities—you can carry it from room to room—it weighs no more than a suitcase.

It is just the thing for those little impromptu concerts and dances which make Christmas worth while.

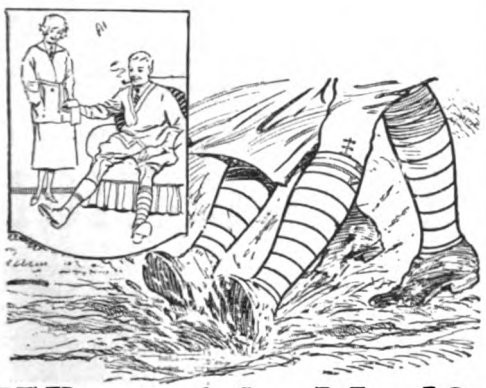
Unaffected by extremes of heat or cold, as the sounds are produced by tuning forks, the Dulcitone never needs tuning. It is ideal for children practising, for school use, and for all those occasions which call for a handy portable piano.

Price **£25** *net cash.*

Terms £5 down and 11 monthly payments of £2 each.

It is an invaluable instrument for the Colonies or abroad.

THOMAS MACHELL & SONS, 49, Great Western Rd., Glasgow. H4



What of the Mud?

Maybe it's a muddy short cut, across the turnip field. But Fox's Puttees make no account of mud or clay — and they keep the legs warm and dry.

Very sensible leg-wear, and most hygienic. As for appearance, the spiral fit, non-fray edges, and many colour shades, make Fox's Puttees as smart as they are practical. And long wear is assured by the fine quality material.

Motor cyclists as well as walkers find Fox's Puttees most practical.

FOX'S
IMPROVED
PUTTEES

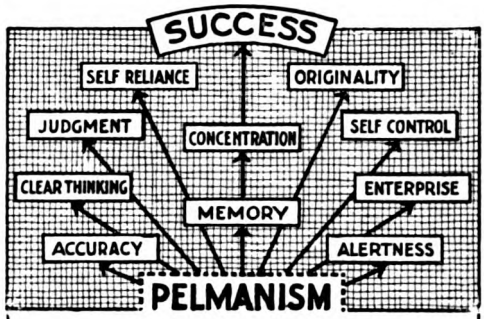
FOR LADIES	Per Pair
With spats - - - - (detachable 1/- extra)	13/6
Without spats - - - -	8/6
Superfine—Bright Art Shades (without spats)	16/-
FOR MEN	**Per Pair**
Regulation Heavy-weight -	9/-
Extra Fine Light-weight -	11/-
Extra Fine Light Shade -	12/-
Tropical Weight - - -	9/-
Superfine—Bright Art Shades -	20/-

CAUTION. *— See the name "Fox" on the metal discs (right and left) attached to every genuine pair of Fox's New Non-fray Spiral Puttees.*

FOX BROTHERS & CO., Ltd., (Dept. F8), Wellington., Somerset.

F.I.P.

P 8



The Power that Pelmanism Gives

SUCCESS in life under present conditions depends more than ever upon personal efficiency. In every profession and calling there is the keenest competition to be faced and only Men and Women with Trained and Efficient Minds can possibly hope to win through. Pelmanism has helped 500,000 people to develop their mental powers and increase their efficiency. It will help YOU in the same way. The Power that Pelmanism gives is limitless. It develops Concentration and Memory naturally, easily and in a most interesting way—gives Confidence and Self-Reliance—strengthens Character—increases Earning Power—and leads to Promotion and Success.

Remarkable Book on Personal Efficiency FREE.

The second edition of that notable book "THE EFFICIENT MIND" is now ready. It contains many new and interesting facts concerning Mind Training and the wonderful results obtained by the Pelman Method, together with the opinions (and portraits) of many well-known men and women who have written on the subject of Pelmanism. This work should be in the hands of every thoughtful, enterprising reader. Send a post-card and obtain a copy FREE of cost. Write for this book to-day to

THE SECRETARY,

PELMAN INSTITUTE

22 PELMAN HOUSE, BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

Branches: PARIS, 35 Rue Boissy d'Anglas; NEW YORK, 2575 Broadway; MELBOURNE, 396 Flinders Lane; DURBAN, Natal Bank Chambers.

Riley's "Home Billiards"

The indoor recreation for old and young.

14/-

A P.O. for 14/- will bring the popular 6 ft. 4 in. size Riley "Home" Billiard Table to your door—carriage paid to any address if within 1 mile of any railway station in United Kingdom. The balance you pay monthly whilst you play.

Write for Free Art List.

There is no game more fascinating and brimful of enjoyment than the King of Indoor Games—Billiards, when played in your own home on a Riley "Home" Billiard Table. Sons, Daughters, Father, Mother—all can enter wholeheartedly into the game. "Home" Billiards is the binder of the family circle—an irresistible indulgement to stay indoors during the winter evenings. Commence the happy home-life habit in your home.

Seven Days' FREE trial.

RILEY'S "HOME" BILLIARD TABLES

Sizes and Prices:

4 ft. 4 in. × 2 ft. 4 in.	...	£7 0 0	}	or in 18 monthly payments of 8/6, 11/-, 14/-, 18/-, 26/-.
5 ft. 4 in. × 2 ft. 10 in.	...	£9 0 0		
6 ft. 4 in. × 3 ft. 4 in.	...	£11 15 0		
7 ft. 4 in. × 3 ft. 10 in.	...	£15 0 0		
8 ft. 4 in. × 4 ft. 4 in.	...	£21 10 0		

RILEY'S BILLIARD & "COMBINE" DINING TABLES

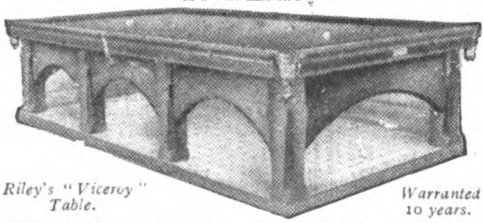
Riley's "Cabriole" Billiard and Dining Table.

In Oak or Mahogany. Complete with all accessories. See art list for prices. The prices below are for Mahogany Round Leg pattern:

5 ft. 4 in. × 2 ft. 10 in.	...	£22 10 0	}	or in 13 or 20 monthly payments.
6 ft. 4 in. × 3 ft. 4 in.	...	£23 10 0		
7 ft. 4 in. × 3 ft. 10 in.	...	£33 0 0		
8 ft. 4 in. × 4 ft. 4 in.	...	£43 0 0		
9 ft. 4 in. × 4 ft. 10 in.	...	£50 0 0		

See price list for various designs and prices.

RILEY'S FULL-SIZE BILLIARD TABLES



Riley's "Viceroy" Table. *Warranted 10 years.*

Riley's are the largest makers of full-size Billiard Tables in Great Britain. Write for particulars. Estimates given free for all repairs and accessories.

E. J. RILEY, LTD., Crane Works, Accrington.

London Showrooms (Dept. A) - 147, Aldersgate Street, E.C.

℞K

DRUGS Do Not Cure INDIGESTION

Drugs are Dangerous. The taking of drugs to relieve the symptoms of Indigestion is a positive danger to the digestive organs, leading to harmful and permanent complications. No lasting benefit can result from the attempt to relieve Indigestion by drugs. Their action is merely of a temporarily sedative nature and does not effect any permanent cure. Temporarily to soothe the symptoms is to court their return in a more aggravated form and the danger of chronic dyspepsia.

Removing the cause of Indigestion. Bragg's Charcoal treatment for Indigestion strikes at the root of the malady by removing the *cause, i.e.*, the substances rejected by the digestive organs as incapable of assimilation by the body, in a perfectly natural and harmless fashion. The action is neither sedative nor aperient, but follows natural and scientific laws.

Doctors recommend Nature's Treatment. All doctors recommend Bragg's Charcoal, because it is in no sense a patent medicine but a *natural* substance that frees the digestive tracks from impurities much as the carbon in a filter cleanses impurities from water. Nature's own treatment—absolutely free from harmful after-effects.

Palatable—Easy to take. Bragg's Charcoal is made up in five easy-to-take forms—all are perfectly tasteless and free from grit. Biscuits (the most popular form), 1s. 8d., 3s. 2d., 6s. per box; Powder, 2s. 6d. and 4s. 6d. per bottle; Lozenges and Tablets, 1s. 6d. and 5s. per box; Capsules, 2s. 6d. per box. Obtainable from *all* Chemists.

Nature's way of Health. How Bragg's Charcoal treatment gives lasting benefit to sufferers from Indigestion, its action and the scientific principles upon which the treatment is based, are all told in straightforward language in "Nature's Way of Health," a little brochure which repays reading.

A Week's Treatment Free. Fill in the Coupon below and the little Book, together with a generous Free Sample of Bragg's Charcoal Preparations, will be sent to you. Post the Coupon to-day, enclosing 2d. in stamps to cover half the return postage.

.....

FREE SAMPLE COUPON.

Cut out this Coupon and post it to J. L. BRAGG, LTD., 60, Beaconsfield Road, London, N.11.

Send me a free sample of Bragg's Charcoal Preparations, and I will give the remedy a fair trial. I enclose 2d. in stamps to cover half the postage.

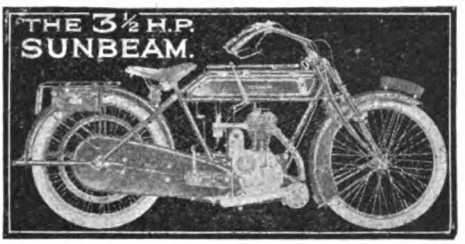
Name.....

Address.....

S.M. 12/23. .....

SUNBEAM MOTOR CYCLES

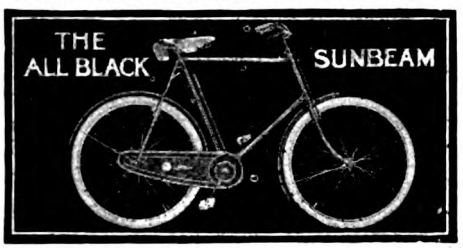
With Oil-Bath Chain Transmission



Sunbeam Motor Cycles are far ahead of any others in design, perfect workmanship and finish. They have set a standard and fashion which few have attempted to approach—and none succeeded. For sheer value they are absolutely unequalled. They are built to last, will outlast any other machine and therefore always command a good second-hand price. Catalogue 4 contains full descriptions and illustrations of all models and will be sent post free.

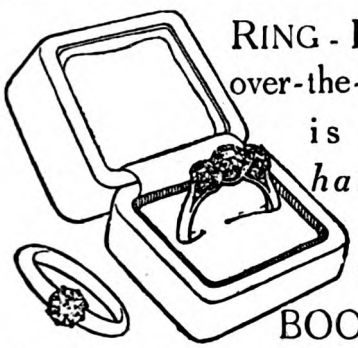
All-Black SUNBEAM BICYCLES

With no parts to rust and Little Oil-Bath Gear Case, rendering pedalling easier and reducing friction and wear to a minimum. They are magnificently made, will outlast many ordinary bicycles and are far cheaper in the long run. Catalogue 5 contains full descriptions and illustrations of all models and will be sent post free.



JOHN MARSTON, LTD.,
SUNBEAMLAND, WOLVERHAMPTON.

London Showrooms: { 57, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.1.
157, Sloane Street, S.W.1.



RING-BUYING over-the-Counter is not so *handy* as this "RING BOOK" Way

Many hundreds of people, Abroad and at Home, have endorsed our "RING BOOK" Way of buying RINGS. This recent Testimony came from a London purchaser:—

(4) "... *The Ring has given the greatest satisfaction... It has been* much easier *for me to have made this purchase with you—from Newcastle —than it would have been for me to have bought it 'over-the-counter' here in London.*"

Write for the "RING BOOK." It explains the *safe and easy* way of Ring-buying. We send it FREE to those contemplating a Ring purchase. It illustrates 122 Engagement, Dress and Men's Rings so naturally that you seem to be choosing from the actual Rings.

The "RING BOOK" Way gives 14 days' approval, then money back *in full* if you wish. And at *any time after purchase*, we will buy back your Ring, under Ring Book conditions, at 10% less than what you paid. Send for the "RING BOOK" and FINGER SIZE CARD and read *what Buyers say* of this new Way.

The NORTHERN GOLDSMITHS Co.
"The RING SHOP for the WORLD."
No. 6, GOLDSMITHS' HALL, NEWCASTLE-on-TYNE, Eng.

Style 1002. In Black Box Calf, leather lined, double sole, round toe. Perfect fit by post assured by Saxone 119 fittings. Post paid British Isles **35/9**

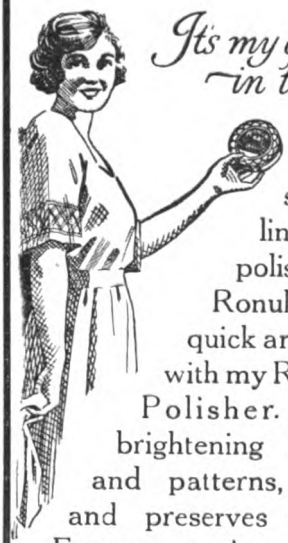
Style 1002.

Weather the Weather

There's an extra sole and a leather lining between you and the worst weather in these boots. Stout weather-tight Saxones that are flexible and comfortable to wear. You will need a pair.

Catalogue Post Free.

SAXONE SHOE CO LTD
(Dept. S.12), KILMARNOCK, SCOTLAND.



It's my greatest help in the House—

"I never scrub my lino now — I polish it with Ronuk. It is such quick and easy work with my Ronuk Home Polisher. Besides brightening the colours and patterns, it protects and preserves the surface. Everyone notices and admires the beautiful polish on my floors—all due to Ronuk! And it has such a pleasant, refreshing smell."

RONUK
FLOOR POLISH

It protects the surface because the wear is on the RONUK—not on the Lino.

It polishes, preserves and purifies.

For your Furniture, use RONUK FURNITURE CREAM, which gives

"The Brightest Shine in the Shortest Time."

SOLD EVERYWHERE.

RONUK, LTD., PORTSLADE, SUSSEX.

When buying RONUK, ask to see that wonderful labour-saving device, the **RONUK HOME POLISHER, Price 7/6**

Fully illustrated Booklet free on request to RONUK, Ltd., PORTSLADE, SUSSEX.

WILSON'S "SUNBEAM"
—*"the GAS-fire like a Coal fire"*

Fits into existing coal grate after front bars are removed. Has the genial appearance of a coal fire but none of the coal fire's dirt or trouble—latest radiant heating principle with economical gas consumption. Ventilation perfect—positively silent. Highly suitable, from its simple design, for all interior schemes of decoration.

PRICE FROM **52/6** MADE IN 5 SIZES.

SEE IT AT YOUR GAS SHOWROOMS!
Also from Plumbers, Ironmongers, etc., etc.

Art Booklet FREE

WILSONS & MATHIESONS, LTD.
(Dept. G), Carlton Works, ARMLEY, Leeds.
(RADIATION, LTD., Proprietors.)

JOHN DYERS famous **VAT DYED GUARANTEED FADELESS CASEMENT CLOTH** is ideal for every purpose where a durable and unfadable fabric is required.

59 INCHES WIDE.

"Fastoall"

1/9½ PER YARD POST FREE.

Write to Dept. I for free copy of "Rat-Tat" Shopping Guide.

In Cream, Grey, Mauve, Orange, Primrose, Blue, Black, Green, Pink, Brown.

WRITE FOR FREE PATTERNS.

Kings Road John Dyer **SOUTHSEA.**

Southsea's Greatest Store
60 Departments.

– and now in a quaint old-time sampler setting come new Chocolates of rare goodness from the famous house of

Mackintosh.

You will like

Mackintosh's SAMPLER CHOCOLATES

because of their delicious variety. Choice centres of Marzipan, Nougatine, Montelimart, Fruit Jelly and Cream-cup; their coverture—chocolate exquisite in flavour. All confectioners now stock Mackintosh's Sampler Chocolates; try them to-day.

MADE BY JOHN MACKINTOSH & SONS, LTD., HALIFAX, ENGLAND

The MORNING CUP of TEA

the best at all times—

HOME & COLONIAL TEAS

For sons, daughters, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces —

for each and everyone there's no better gift than a Ingersoll. It completely solves the problem of what to give. The extensive range of Ingersolls covering almost every need makes the selection of Xmas gifts just a simple matter of buying the model to suit the individual taste at the price *to suit your pocket.*

Look for the dealer who displays the sign:—

ACCREDITED AGENT FOR
INGERSOLL WATCHES AND CLOCKS.

Refuse Substitutes.—Dealers who offer you a substitute have an ulterior motive for so doing. Insist on an Ingersoll and buy it at the sign of the Ingersoll Accredited Agent.

INGERSOLL WATCH CO., LTD., 258, Ingersoll House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Yankee Improved - - 12/6
Radiolite 17/6
Other Models 10.6 to 45/-
INGERSOLL ALARM CLOCKS
7/6 to 21/-.

THERE'S NO GIFT LIKE AN
Ingersoll
NOTHING USED SO MUCH!

Start sketching right away

Hassall

Copy this Sketch for Free Personal Criticism.

LET sketching lift you out of yourself and help you to forget everyday worries. Let your pen and brush record your own personal impressions. Capture the fleeting moments and fix them for ever in your sketch book.

The Hassall Course will show you how to start sketching right away. The very first lesson will teach you the principles of drawing. The Hassall School's method of personal and individual tuition will guide you through the most difficult stage of all—the first stage—and then lead you to a thorough mastery of your pencil and brush.

Perhaps you think you cannot sketch. But if you *want* to sketch—if you feel the desire within you to jot down your impressions—if you have appreciation for art—then you have talent for drawing. You *could* sketch if you were told how to. Let Mr. John Hassall tell you how.

Scarcely a day passes without news of fresh successes achieved by Hassall students.

Student 0,117 writes as follows:—

28th April, 1923.

"Thank you very much indeed for the Diploma, which I am very proud of and shall treasure always. I enjoyed working at every lesson of your Course, and I am sure that I have improved more than words can tell by its teaching."

Mr. John Hassall, R.I.

POST THIS COUPON TO-DAY,
Or send a letter if you do not want to cut the paper, to **THE JOHN HASSALL CORRESPONDENCE ART SCHOOL, LTD., 3, Stratford Studios, Stratford Road, Kensington, W.8.**
Principal - **Mr. JOHN HASSALL, R.I.**

I enclose you a drawing for your free criticism.

Please send me, free of all cost, full particulars of how to become a successful artist. Please add a copy of your illustrated book, "The John Hassall Way."

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

(S. Dec. 23.) .....

THE JOHN HASSALL CORRESPONDENCE ART SCHOOL, Ltd.,
3, STRATFORD STUDIOS, STRATFORD ROAD, KENSINGTON, W.8.

There Is Pleasure and Profit

In Buying Barratts Patent By Post.

The profit is in the difference between Barratts Factory price and what you would pay the middleman for a patent shoe of equal quality. Why pay at least one-third more when you get nothing for it?—a salesman can't impart quality to a shoe—only the makers can do that. Then buy from the makers and get quality patent.

Direct from Factory

18/6

POST FREE.

Postage extra overseas.

Style 2315

The Pleasure of Perfect Patent

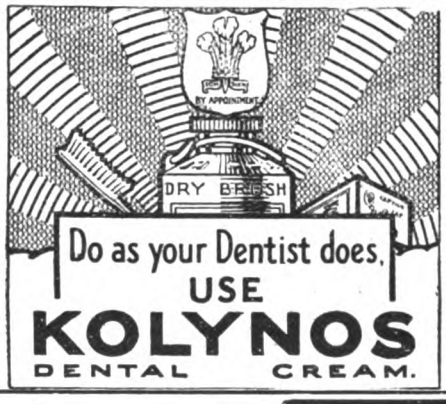
is yours for 18/6. Good patent suits all occasions, shopping, business, the party, the dance. You'll know this is good patent as soon as you see it. Look at the modelling—refined and graceful—essentially ladylike. Smart heel and roomy, blocked toe. Tough, flexibly stitched soles (handsewn principle) of best English leather. Smooth, solid leather insoles. Perfect ankle fitting. Satisfaction guaranteed or money back.

Post Your Order to Factory Now.

Mention Style 2315 and size. Sizes stocked: 2, 2½, 3, 3½, 4, 4½, 5, 5½, 6, 6½, 7, 7½, 8, all comfy width. (Size 8 1/- extra.) Or send "Footshape," pencil outline of stockinged foot resting with normal pressure on paper, hold pencil upright. Or send old shoe. Enclose cheque or money order for 18/6. With overseas orders add postage. 10/- deposit only with cash on delivery orders.

W. BARRATT & CO., LTD., 20, Footshape Works, Northampton.

Send 3d. postage for Barratts 162-page Illustrated Catalogue.



Do as your Dentist does.
USE
KOLYNOS
DENTAL CREAM.

GREY HAIR

FOR TRIAL 8D. BOTTLE.

SHADEINE tints Grey Hair any natural tint from BLONDE to BLACK, AUBURN or GOLDEN, is sold in all colours, is perfectly harmless, contains no lead, silver, mercury, etc. Copy of Medical certificate enclosed. Cannot produce unnatural tints. State colour required. **Trial bottle, 8d.,** per post 10d.; **1/6,** post 1/7; **2/6,** post 2/10; **3/9,** post 4/3

SHADEINE CO.
DEPT. S.T.
58, T. WESTBOURNE GROVE, LONDON, W.

TRY **SHADEINE**

BIG PRICES PAID FOR

OLD FALSE TEETH

If you have any teeth on vulcanite or on silver, on gold or on platinum, that are not in use, and wish to receive **FULL VALUE,** send them (or call) to

E. LEWIS, (Desk S.M.), 24, WARWICK STREET off Regent Street, LONDON, W.1

(Close to Robinson & Cleaver's.) (*Established* 1873.)

Also at 29, London Street, Southport, Lancs.

I pay the best price obtainable; also pay good prices for Platinum, Dental Alloy, Old Gold and Silver.

Fill in Coupon below and I will send you free an addressed box for sending teeth for valuation.

To MR. E. LEWIS (Desk S.M.), 24, Warwick Street, off Regent Street, London, W.1.

Sir,—Please send to me an addressed box for sending old artificial teeth that I have for disposal, on the clear understanding that you will return the teeth to me, post paid, if I do not consider your cash offer satisfactory

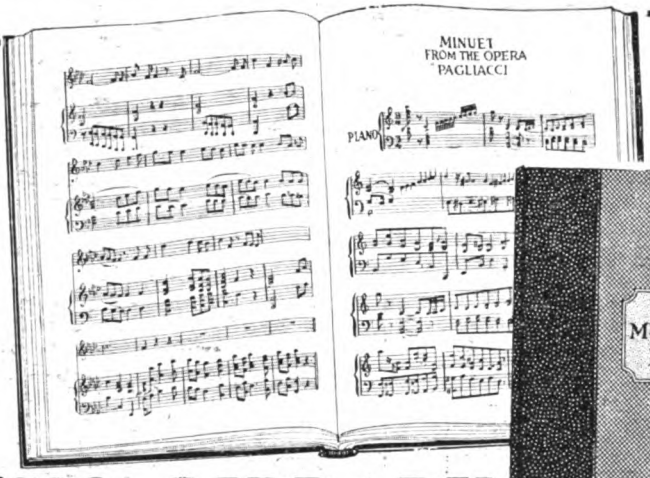
NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

Postage ½d. in open envelope

Dance Music
Classical Music.
Opera Music.
Popular Music.

Get this



Post Coupon To-day

MUSIC LIBRARY

for YOUR home.

These four volumes contain a complete selection of the world's most beautiful songs and pianoforte solos. Every piece you could desire will be found here. There are songs to suit every voice. Pianoforte Solos for every performer. The music for all occasions—for the musical evening at home or with friends, for concert parties, etc., etc.

THE MUSIC LOVERS' PORTFOLIO

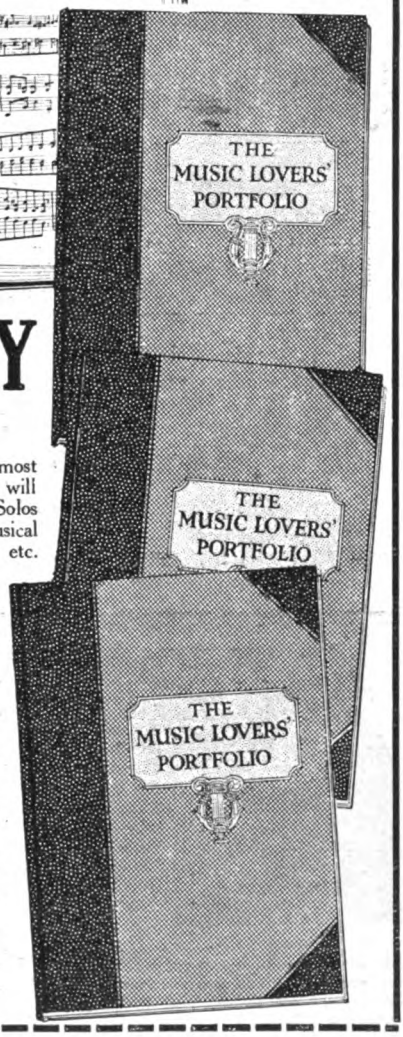
Edited by SIR LANDON RONALD.

The Portfolio is complete in four beautifully bound volumes. Don't buy any new music until you have enquired about this magnificent library which contains

Over 100 of the World's Best Songs & Pianoforte Solos:

Three Green Bonnets	*Guy D'Hardelot*
Bless You	*Ivor Novello*
Wings of Song	*Mendelssohn*
I found a Paradise	*Dorothy Forster*
The Asra	*Rubinstein*
The Sundial in my Garden	*Adams*
Fadeless Love	*Brahms*
I will not doubt	*Cowen*
Orpheus with his Lute	*Sullivan*
Top o' the Hill	*Samuel*
Thou art so like a Flower	*Schumann*
Once	*Hervey*
Nymphs and Shepherds	*Purcell*
The Guardian Angel	*Lehmann*
The Golden Vanity	*Traditional*
Shepherd's Song	*Elgar*
Heaven's Gift	*Dereham*
Nocturne	*Denza*
The Two Grenadiers	*Schumann*
Thou art so like a Flower	*Rubinstein*
Most Wonderful of All	*Silesu*
Dearest Name	*Verdi*
A Flower from Memory's Garden	*Thompson*
The Sandman	*Brahms*
Good-night	*Fraser-Simson*
Oh! that we two were Maying	*Nevin*
The Radiance in Your Eyes	*Novello*
Non Piu Andrai	*Mozart*
Cradle Song	*Brahms*
Since I have loved thee	*Johnson*
Woodland Song	*Clutsam*
Fifth Symphony, 1st Movement	*Beethoven*
Daphne	*Dunhill*
Minuet from "Pagliacci"	*Leoncavallo*

Etc., Etc. **Etc., Etc.**



Sent FREE

If you will just fill in your name and address on the coupon and post it on to us we will send you, free of any charge whatever, a handsome booklet giving full particulars of this unique Music Library. There is absolutely no charge for this book, so tear off the coupon and send it now.

FREE — Cut out and post to-day

To the WAVERLEY BOOK CO., Ltd. (Dept. Str. N.),
96, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.

Please send me, without charge, your Free Illustrated Booklet, containing all particulars as to contents, etc., of "THE MUSIC LOVERS' PORTFOLIO," also information as to your offer to send the Complete Work for a nominal first payment, the balance to be paid by small monthly payments, beginning thirty days after delivery of Work.

South African readers should post Coupon to Central News Agency, Ltd., P.O. Box 1033, Johannesburg.

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

(Send this form or a postcard.)

Str. N., 1923.

MOORCROFT

(REGISTERED TRADE MARK.)

POTTERY

The exhibition of a fine group of pieces of "Moorcroft" Ware at the Royal Society, Albemarle Street, included some of the most beautiful effects which have been produced in modern ceramic art. *The Connoisseur.*

EACH PIECE SIGNED

W. Moorcroft

W. MOORCROFT, LTD., POTTERS, BURSLEM.
To be obtained from all the Principal Dealers.

The Quick Way to Piano Playing

In Two-thirds Less Time with a Quarter the Work at a Tenth the Expense is by means of "Beckerism." The old idea of mechanical Practice! Practice! Practice! is a fetish which kills the ambition of earnest students, and does not produce one good pianist in 500. During twenty-two years I have taught thousands by post with unfailing success. Crystal-clear, simple as ABC, **illustrated** teaching, with lucid instructions, **always at your side,** not half an hour weekly. It is INTENSIVE TRAINING. Absorbingly interesting all the time, no dull moments. Age or occupation no bar to success.

READ WHAT OTHERS SAY

A Beginner writes: "It is scarcely a month since I began and I can find the notes and play the exercises **without looking at the keys.** It is delightful."—Miss G. F., Gorleston-on-Sea.

An Elementary: "I had never imagined such improvement as I have made possible in so short a time. I shall recommend your admirable methods to my friends."—Miss A. W., Devonport.

A Moderate: "I find I am **quickly regaining my former proficiency.** Hands and fingers are decidedly stronger and the **keyboard control is wonderful.**"—Miss A. C., Skipton.

WHY NOT YOU?

FREE COPY of my book "Mind, Muscle and Keyboard," for the asking. Send postcard (Mrs., Miss, Rev., or Mr.) and one word to suit your case—Beginner, Elementary, Moderate, or Advanced, to—

Mr. H. BECKER,
151, Bristol House, Holborn Viaduct, LONDON, E.C.1.

Give your Home an Xmas Gift!

No Christmas bounty will be more universally appreciated than a gift *to your home* of this luxurious chair. Nowhere else can you buy its equal—built with a wonderful patent springing system to give comfort and beauty *for ever.*

The **DEEP LUXURIOUS**

Qualitor

The Chair of EXTRA Worth!

Nor need you pay dearly for it That is the charm of the "QUALITOR"—for it is costly springing, enduring hardwood frame, pure stuffing, and exquisite TAPESTRY coverings brought down to a popular price—**£4 15 0** carriage paid everywhere in British Isles except Ireland. Send to-day for remarkable photographic evidence of *worth* and wide range of tapestry patterns—there is no charge.

There are Settees to match.

THE QUALITOR UPHOLSTERY CO.
2, HARMER STREET LEEDS.

Send a card for *SPECIAL* Offer!

TURKISH BATHS

IN THE PRIVACY OF HOME

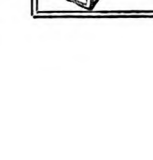
THE GEM Cabinet is the simplest, safest and most satisfactory means of obtaining all the benefits and pleasure of hot air, steam, medicated or perfumed baths. These baths cleanse the system thoroughly, and remove impurities which cause ill health. Invaluable for treatment of Rheumatism, Sciatica, Liver and Kidney Troubles, Eczema, etc.

Recommended by Physicians. ***Booklet free.***

THE GEM SUPPLIES CO., LTD.,
(Dept. H), 67, Southwark St., London, S.E.1

Discovered in Africa

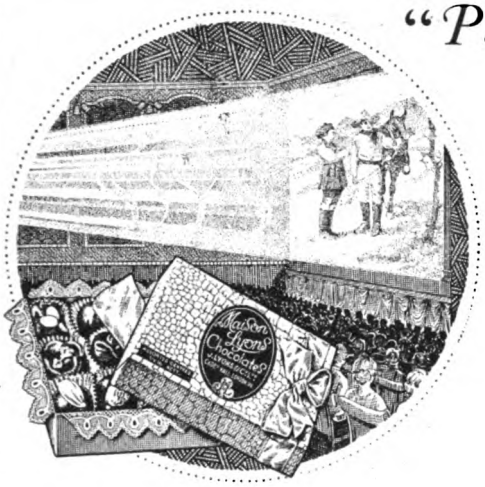
by a British Naval Officer. Ki-uma, the tropical herbal ointment used by primitive natives for curing Rheumatic ailments. It quickly cures Rheumatism, Neuritis, Lumbago, Swollen Joints and Feet. Hundreds of satisfied users. "The Countess of Kingston is glad to be able to say that she has found the Ki-uma Ointment of great benefit for her rheumatic knee. After a course of treatment she has had no return of pain."



KI-UMA **is Antiseptic, Harmless, Stainless.**

All Chemists. Price 3/- per tin; or post free from KI-UMA, Ltd. (Dept. A), Milsom Street, Bath; or Heppells, Chemists, 164, Piccadilly, London and Brighton. Large sample tin 1/3 post free.

"Part of the Pleasure at the Pictures"



Maison Lyons Chocolates

SOLD by MOST HIGH-CLASS CONFECTIONERS AND IN THEATRES AND CINEMAS and in the Salons at the MAISON LYONS; CORNER HOUSES, and in LYONS' TEASHOPS.

can make every moment at the pictures yield its share of pleasure. Even the Censor's Certificate finds you interested—in the open box on your lap!

4/- lb.

J. Lyons & Co., Ltd., London, W.

The Sweet Odour of Lavender

You are certain to like PRICE'S OLD ENGLISH LAVENDER SOAP not only because of its enduring fragrance; not only because of its soft and profuse lather, but because of its sheer economy and intrinsic charm.

Fragrant to the very last.

PRICE'S Old English Lavender Soap

Ask your Stores.

Price's Soap Co., Ltd. London.

Do You Want a Bigger Salary?

It does not matter what you are To-day, or what you were Yesterday. To-morrow is the day of Opportunity. Nothing can keep you *down* if you really make up your mind to go *up*. In just one hour a day—in the spare time you will never miss—you can fit yourself for a better job and a bigger salary.

The only effective method of affording postal tuition is through the medium of Instruction Papers specially compiled for that purpose.

The I.C.S. have the largest and most up-to-date range of such Instruction Papers of any institution in the world.

During the past thirty years over 2½ millions of students have profited from the professional, technical and commercial training provided by the I.C.S.

As a first step in your progress, mark and forward this coupon so that we can satisfy you that, with our help, you can secure both.

International Correspondence Schools, Ltd., 16, International Buildings, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Please send me your booklet containing full particulars of the course of Correspondence Training before which I have marked X. I assume no obligation.

...Accountancy	...French & Spanish
...Advertising	...Salesmanship
...Building	...Engineering—every branch, state which .....
...Draughtsmanship	
...Professional Exams.	...Woodworking

The I.C.S. teach wherever the post reaches, and have **over 300 Courses of Study.** If, therefore, your subject is not in the above list, write it here.

.....

Name.....

Address.....

It takes—

PEGAMOID

REGISTERED TRADE MARK

LEATHER CLOTH

to stand this sort of treatment. The Pegamoid Brand is the All-British Leather Cloth, which is scratchless, greaseproof, waterproof and stainless.

Pegamoid Brand Leather Cloth looks exactly like leather, wears better and costs far less. But be sure it *is* the Pegamoid Brand—not every leather cloth is Pegamoid.

All Shades and Grains.
Ask your Upholsterer.

SAMPLES ON REQUEST—

NEW PEGAMOID, Ltd.
(Dept. C), 134, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.4

Sketch ME

You could easily accept this invitation if you had developed your drawing instinct by the simple, logical methods of "Nature Training" embodied in the Press Art School's Postal Courses.

The girl Pupil who drew this "Looking for Father Christmas" sketch has studied Drawing under my easy, *natural* methods. Before completing the Preparatory Course she had sold £10 worth of her Sketches.

If *you* would like to draw just for the fun of it, or with the aim of becoming a Professional Artist, write for my

FREE ILL'D PROSPECTUS

describing Lessons for the raw Beginner; and Instruction for Advanced Pupils who, though able to draw, lack the Technique necessary for *the production of readily saleable* work. Short or long Courses can be arranged to meet the particular needs of *individual* Pupils, and to cover special branches of work as well as general comprehensive Training.

Send me a copy of this Pupil's Sketch or an original Drawing (preferred), for a helpful Criticism as well as the Prospectus, free. A post-card *alone* will bring you the Prospectus.

Write to me personally: Percy V. Bradshaw, Principal,
PRESS ART SCHOOL, (Dept. S.M. 101), Tudor Hall, Forest Hill, S.E.23

IT S LIKE PLAYING "HAMLET" and leaving out the Prince of Denmark to buy pen-duplicate books not supplied with ZANETIC Pen-copying Paper. If security is valued and permanency of copy desired, it is vital to be sure you are supplied with ZANETIC. Zanetic copies are more distinct than the original.

ZANETIC
PEN-COPYING PAPER

Of Stationers, or write the Makers,
S., ZANETIC, Duncan Rd., Leicester.

Foots' Bath Cabinet

THE health value of Thermal (Hot Air or Vapour) Bathing is an established fact. Nothing else is so effective in preventing sickness, or for the cure of Colds, Influenza, Rheumatism, Sciatica, Blood, Skin, Liver, and Kidney Complaints. It eliminates the poisonous matters from the system, increases the flow of blood—the life current—freed from its impurities, clears the skin, recuperates and revitalises the body, quiets the nerves, rests the tired, creates that delightful feeling of invigorated health and strength, insures perfect cleanliness, and is helpful in every way.

Every form of Hot Air, Vapour, or Medicated Baths can be enjoyed privately at home with our Patent Safety Cabinet. When not in use it folds into a small, compact space.

Complete, with **SAFETY OUTSIDE HEATER,** &c.

Write for Bath Book, B 3, Post Free.

J. FOOT & SON, Ltd. (Dept. B 3), 171, New Bond St., London, W.1.

10 Fine quality Diamonds-

-in 18ct Gold & Platinum mount

5 Well matched Diamonds in 18ct Gold & Platinum mount

7 Selected Diamonds in 18ct Gold & Platinum mount.

2 Well Matched Diamonds in 18ct Gold & Platinum mount.

3 Large Fine quality Diamonds in 18ct Gold & Platimum mount.

Select the one

which you admire of these Diamond Rings. at prices from

£5 to £20

(According to size of stone,)

and have it sent to your home on approval—

Fine quality Lustrous Diamonds in 18ct Gold mount.

3 Large Lustrous Diamonds in 18ct Gold mount.

5 Perfectly Matched Diamonds in 18ct Gold mount.

7 Well matched Diamonds in 18ct Gold & Platinum mount.

ESTABLISHED 100 YEARS

Bravingtons

296-298 PENTONVILLE ROAD, KINGS CROSS, N.1.
CLOSED THURSDAY AT 1 P.M.- OPEN SATURDAY TILL 8.30 P.M.

71, LUDGATE HILL. E.C.4.
CLOSED SATURDAY AT 1 P.M.- OPEN THURSDAY TILL 7.0 P.M.

A. K. Co., Ltd.

Yardley's
Old English Lavender Soap

Luxuriously perfumed with the delightful fragrance of the English Lavender blossom, it brings to the Toilet a note of luxury and elegance. Its soft mellow lather refines the skin and preserves the beauty of its tint and texture.

Reduced price **3/-** per box of 3 large tablets.

Of all Chemists and Stores

YARDLEY & CO., Ltd., 8, **New Bond St., London.**

BY APPOINTMENT.

"You *can't* get wet in the (Reg'd)"

35/- Mattamac

Feather Weight STORMPROOF

Don t risk disappointment with an imitation. Get the *genuine* which is labelled "Mattamac" beneath the coat-hanger.

A "Mattamac" is identical in appearance with the usual five-guinea Weatherproof. In utility, also, it equals its much-more-costly competitor. It wears as long, weighs one-third, and is absolutely Waterproof. Though light and compact-folding, the "Mattamac" is Wind and Chill proof as well as Wet proof.

You can use it *additionally* as a light Over. oat for Driving, Motoring, Shopping, etc.

WEIGHT 19 ozs.

FOLDS INTO THIS SIZE

(Reg'd Trade Mark.)

35/-

For Man, Woman, and Child.

"Matta" Fabric is exceedingly compact. The Coat worn by the 6 ft. man beneath, when folded, just made this handful. *This is drawn from an actual photo of his hand and the "Mattamac" he wears, folded to fit snugly into his jacket pocket.*

3 ozs. HEAVIER THAN AN UMBRELLA

Belted "Mattamac" (21½ oz.) **39/6**

19 OUNCES WEIGHT 35/-

Colours: Fawn, Olive, Tan, Grey, Black and Blue shades.

Country "Mattamac" (19-oz.) **35/-**

Children's Models for all ages at size prices (see Booklet)

Sporting Fawn (19 oz.) *Model* **35/-**

With Belt (21½ oz.) **39/6** *(For Ladies and Men.)*

Illustrations are direct Drawings from photos of stock "Mattamac"

Stormproofs: Belted Model (left) **39/6**; *unbelted (right)* **35/-**

MADE FOR EVERY OUTDOOR PURPOSE

Town and Country Unbelted Models, **35/-**; Belted Models, **39/6**; wide-skirted Equestrian Coats from **49/6** (no extra charge for the large sizes); and Children's Models for all ages at size prices. Made entirely from the genuine "Matta" (Reg'd) Fabric, with adjustable wind-cuffs, perpendicular pockets, lined shoulders, Raglan sleeves, roomy "under-arms," and the famous cut of Conduit St., W.

"MATTAMAC" ART BOOKLET POST FREE

illustrating 11 Models. A p.c. brings the Booklet and Patterns of "Matta" Fabric, or you can safely send your order without waiting.

SENT ON SEVEN DAYS' FREE APPROVAL

You buy without risk. Send chest measurement **over** waistcoat (Ladies measure over Blouse), height and remittance, stating colour, and your "Mattamac" will be sent post free British Isles (extra abroad). If you are not fully satisfied you can return it within 7 days of receipt and get your money back in full. "Mattamac" Stormproofs are *only* obtainable from the London and Birmingham Showrooms, from certain accredited Provincial Agents, and by post from the Conduit St. Headquarters. If unable personally to inspect Models, send order with remittance, or write to Pearson Bros., the Sole Manufacturers, for the **"Mattamac" Booklet 26 G.**

PEARSON BROTHERS

45, Kingston House, CONDUIT STREET, LONDON, W.1.

Midland "Mattamac" Showrooms **134 NEW ST., BIRMINGHAM** *(opposite Corporation St.)*

City "Mattamac" Branch: **20 LUDGATE HILL, E.C.4** *(Ten doors west of St. Paul's)*

SAVE TIME

SAVE WORRY SAVE MONEY

by ordering direct from your own home. We guarantee to fit you as well as if you called personally and to refund your cash if in any way you are not satisfied.

SEND FOR PATTERNS AND CATALOGUE OF OUR

RIDING BREECHES 21/-

Cut to Measure

SADDLE TWEED SUITINGS 74/6

For Riding Suits and Hard Country Wear. Cut to Measure

BEDFORD RIDING BREECHES CO (*E. Turner, Ltd. Est.* 1908)

(*Dept. M.S.*), 19, NEW QUEBEC STREET, MARBLE ARCH, LONDON, W.C.1.

£10 FREE CASH PRIZES

SIMPLE COMPETITION

WHICH NEEDS BUT A FEW MOMENTS TO SOLVE

Send for Particulars To-Day.

THE PATENT CANVAS SHOE CO.,

1, Stepps Road, Nr. Glasgow.

"D" Kind.

World providers of the Famous Canvas Shoe. Noted for their extraordinary long wearing qualities. In Brown, Black & White State colour and size.

M.H. (address on request): "*15 years ago I purchased a pair—still serviceable.*"

Prices (post free) in U.K.	Child's.	Ladies'	Gent.'s
A. Plain Shoes (without strapping) ..	3/11	4/2	4/6
D. Leather Fittings (as illustration) ..	..	5/-	5/3
E. Superior blocked (unstrapped); Boots 1/- extra	..	6/6	7/-
Felt Slippers, warm-lined, finer jute soles, "cosiest" winter "slip-on" Shoe	3/3	4/-	4/3

Three pairs at one time, 2d. per pair off: 6 pairs 3/. Full list, 1d.

Your Xmas Gift

to any man—*inexpensive*

but of life-long utility

The "Alpha" Portable Trouser Press and Suit Hanger not only perfectly creases and stretches the trousers but it makes the whole suit wrinkle-free as well. It packs into 3 in. x 2 in. x 21½ in., weighs 20 oz., and travels with a man anywhere. **Tens of thousands in use.** Post Free **8/6**

"ALPHA" No. 2 DE LUXE. Polished Walnut Slats, Extra-power Nickelled Springs & Fittings. Hangs on bar or hook. A handsome gift. **Post free 15/6**

Cross Cheque or P.O., "London Joint City & Midland Bank, Ltd."

MAY & CO. (Dept. 11), 3, Tudor St., London, E.C.4.

WHAT VOLTALITE USERS say!

F.C.P., Helston, Cornwall.
I find the Voltalite entirely satisfactory in every way. I ride every day in all weathers and would not be without it at any price.

W.J.L., Sellindge, Kent.
May I express my great appreciation of your 1916 pattern Voltalite Cycle Dynamo? It has been working every evening under every conceivable sort of weather and road condition. Since the dynamo was fitted its working (*i.e.*, lighting mileage) well exceeds 1,500 miles and every mile of it free from lighting trouble. No wonder I'm satisfied.

L.J.P., Sunderland.
I purchased a Voltalite from you in 1917, and it has given me complete satisfaction ever since.

J.P.A., Auckland, New Zealand.
The Voltalite set arrived safely. I am well pleased with it. It is the best and easiest manipulated cycle lamp I have ever used.

R.J.B., Ashford, Kent.
About ten years ago I purchased a Voltalite Cycle Lamp, which has been in constant use ever since and has given every satisfaction.

G.H.J., Aylesbury, Bucks.
I found your Voltalite set the most efficient and "trouble-free" lighting system I ever used. Hence my keenness to use such a set on my motor cycle.

R.P., Broadstairs, Kent.
My Set is in continual use and answers in every respect excellently and saves me a great dea of time and trouble. I consider it fills a long-felt want.

N.S.M.W., Bendigo, Victoria, Australia.
The Voltalite which I purchased from you in the year 1912 is "still going strong." The lamp has been in constant use for 8 years. This is a brilliant performance, and I would not revert to Oil or Carbide Lamps, which cannot equal the Voltalite in regard to Cheapness, Cleanliness and Convenience.

J. A., Trinidad.
About two years ago I purchased a Voltalite Cycle Lamp and I am pleased to state that same is still in service and giving as good a light as when first received.

Mr. H., Devonport, Tasmania.
I beg to acknowledge having safely received my Voltalite, and am pleased to say its qualties exceed my expectations. I am quite satisfied as to its value, especially to those who, like myself, do a lot of night cycling on business.

A.J.A., St. Andrews.
I have had my Voltalite set for some considerable time and it has always been pre-eminently efficient. I was surprised at the remarkable brilliance of light which it can generate and I must congratulate you on the general excellence of the whole set. It has evoked much admiration among my companions.

C.M.C., Fairfield, Liverpool.
I have had one of your complete front and rear lamp outfits, "Voltalite," on my cycle for four and a half years, and it has never *caused any trouble*, and is still *in first-class condition*. During that time I have been travelling over 25,000 miles.

Illustrated Pamphlet, J50, containing extracts from hundreds of unsolicited Testimonials received, on request.

Voltalite
SELF GENERATING ELECTRIC CYCLE LAMP
ALL BRITISH MADE.

As used by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales.

THE BEST
XMAS GIFT
FOR THE
CYCLIST

Described by the Editor of *The Weekly Telegraph* as "The most ingenious adjunct to the cycle that has yet been devised."

THE Voltalite produces by the movement of the cycle, at no cost, from walking to racing speed, an inexhaustible supply of electricity to brilliantly illuminate head lamp and rear lamp. Universally recognised as the most wonderful and efficient of all self-generating electric cycle lamps. Lasts years without attention.

No. V. 2 Head Set, complete, ready for use. **21/-** No. V. 6 Head and Rear Set, Complete, **25/-**

WARNING.—To ensure satisfaction insist on the Voltalite, and firmly refuse inferior substitutes, mostly of foreign manufacture.

Stocked by all high-class Cycle and Electrical Stores. Write direct if unobtainable.

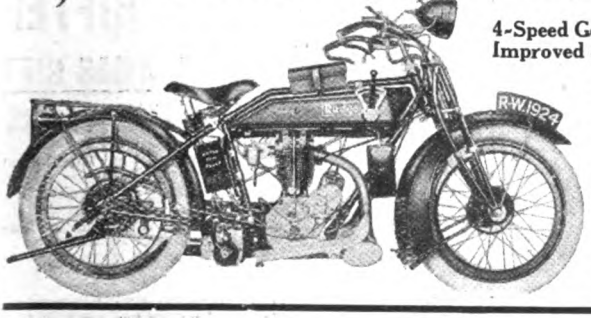
Ward & Goldstone PENDLETON MANCHESTER Ltd.

Give him a 3½ hp Rudge Four Speed
(500 C·C)

A Wonderful Christmas Gift

£65

The new Rudge 3½ h.p. (500 c.c.) Four-Valve Four-Speed Motor Bicycle makes a wonderful Christmas present. It is the very latest product of the Rudge works, and combines the most up-to-date engineering practice with features which make the Rudge Four-Speed unique among motor bicycles.



4-Speed Gear-Box with Double Helical Teeth.
Improved engine with 4 Overhead "Celerity" Valves.
Rudge Racing Type Aluminium Piston.
Interchangeable and quickly detachable wheels.
Electric lighting Equipment.

Write for Rudge Motor Bicycle Catalogue and Rudge Four-Speed Gear-Box Booklet to

Rudge-Whitworth, Ltd., Coventry.
And 230, Tottenham Court Road, London, W.1

Furnivals

"OLD CHELSEA"

ENGLAND

IF YOU ARE CONTEMPLATING BUYING CHINA, ASK TO SEE ONE OF OUR BEAUTIFUL PATTERNS.

PROCURABLE AT ALL THE LEADING CHINA STORES.

May we send you FREE sample of

DAMASCLENE

(Regd. Trade Mark)

the Stainless Cloth that never needs Laundering

For Tablecloths in the Nursery and elsewhere, for Dresser and Shelf Covers, for Tray Cloths (edged with Lace if desired), "Damasclene" is ideal. It looks like real Damask linen, hangs from the table as gracefully, and it never needs laundering.

5/11 a yard 48-50 in. wide. **4/11** a yard 36 in. wide

Obtainable from Drapers, Stores, etc.

FREE Send postcard for explanatory leaflet D5, SAMPLE, and name of nearest stockist.

NEW PEGAMOID LTD.,
134 Queen Victoria St., London

DOCTOR'S CHINA TEA

with all excess of Tannin eliminated has the true tea flavour at its best.

¼lb. sent FREE

Send 3/4 for a pound of Doctor's China Tea to-day. We will include 2 ozs. of the 4/- and 2 ozs. of the 4/6 qualities as a FREE GIFT, together with name of your nearest agent.

HARDEN BROS. & LINDSAY, LTD.,
(Dept. 72),
23, ROOD LANE, LONDON, E.C.3.

Dyspeptics can drink DOCTOR'S CHINA TEA

An Acceptable Gift

What could be more acceptable to the busy housewife than a "Fairy" Gas Iron? It is easier, better, and cleaner than the ordinary flat iron, and will work continuously at a cost of **1d. for every three hours.**

Special Features.—Easily attached to any gas point; hinged top ensures easy and silent lighting; no complicated parts to get out of order; heavily nickel-plated.

CLARKS "FAIRY" GAS IRON

Complete, with STAND, 17/9

from your local Gas Offices, or direct from
CLARK'S SYPHON STOVE CO., Ltd.,
164, Queen Victoria Street, E.C.4.

THE "ROOM TO ROOM" PATENT CINDER SIFTER

REGD. No. 10461.

A USEFUL XMAS GIFT

Light and easily carried. No dust or waste. Saves labour and fuel. Will hold siftings from 10 ordinary fire grates.

Dimensions, 12 in. by 11½ in. Weight about 7 lb. Japanned Black.

Retail Price 7/6 **Carriage Paid U.K.**

In case of any difficulty in obtaining from your Ironmonger, apply

COOMBER BROS.,
Sole Agents,
Q17, Beckwith St., Liverpool.
(Directions supplied with each Sifter.)

Scrumptious!

That's how the children describe Green's Chocolate Mould, and they are good judges too. It appeals to the palates of children and adults alike.

CHOCOLATE IN CHOCOLATE'S MOST DELICIOUS & NOURISHING FORM

GREEN'S CHOCOLATE MOULD

(CHOCOLATE BLANC-MANGE)

ALREADY SWEETENED WITH PURE CANE SUGAR ONLY.

ALWAYS IN SEASON. Splendid with Stewed and Tinned Fruits. Delightful when served with Cream.

Prepared by Greens of Brighton. Manufacturers of Green's Sponge Mixture, etc., etc.

"Good with Everything"

H.P. Sauce

Tempting in itself, H.P. Sauce makes the meal more tempting still—specially good with bacon, fish, cold meat, and cheese.

Try H.P. for yourself.

An Ideal Xmas Present.

NO SMOKE.
NO ODOUR.
NO GLASS CHIMNEY.

300 C.P.

3 HOURS BEAUTIFUL WHITE LIGHT FOR A PENNY.

Table Lamps from - - **55/-**

Storm Lamps from - - **50/-**

The FRANDALE QUICKLIT

PETROL GAS LAMP

LIGHTS WITH MATCHES & HAS A CLEANABLE GENERATOR & AUTOMATIC BURNER CLEANER

The only lamp in the world that combines these features. Burns 5% petrol and 95% air. The cheapest form of lighting known. Very strongly made and beautifully finished. An ornament to any room. Illustrated list showing other styles free on request.

Order direct or through your local dealer. All orders despatched by return of post.

THE QUICKLIT LAMP COMPANY, 61, Lower Mosley Street, Manchester.

Proprietors: FRANK DUNDERDALE, Ltd.

Telephone: 1336 Central. F.A.D.

Booth's "Silicon China," England.

Real "Old Blue Willow" Design.

WHEN BUYING YOUR CHINA, INSIST ON BEING SHOWN THE ABOVE BEAUTIFUL PATTERNS.

OBTAINABLE AT ALL CHINA STORES AT PRICES WITHIN THE REACH OF ALL.

Beautiful Ankles for all who use Rodiod

"Rodiod" does not sag the skin, but leaves it soft, smooth and entirely free from wrinkles. It loosens the congestion of fat, dissolves it and restores the shapely lines of the figure. Send for a jar of Rodiod to-day.

JUST a few minutes each day and you can Rodiod your ankles, shoulders, hips and chin back to beautiful, slender, lithe proportions, and take ten years off your personal appearance. "Rodiod" is known to thousands of men and women as a sure and easily applied remedy for ankles that are too fleshy, shoulders that are too thick, chins that are prone to flabbiness, hips that have lost their graceful shape. Write to-day for a 5/- or 9/- jar, or call for a free consultation.

Sold by Selfridges, Harrods, and all first-class Chemists.

Trial jars, 5/- and 9/-. The 5/- jar contains sufficient for one week's treatment—the 9/- jar more than twice the quantity. Order to-day—you will get delightful results.

RODIOD SALONS

(Dept. S.10) 15, Dover Street, Piccadilly, London, W.

'MUTAX' makes the Dirt Fly!

Do your own Dry Cleaning at Home — safely, cheaply, and efficiently.

Get One To-day

SENT ON 7 DAYS' APPROVAL

The "Mutax" Dry Cleaning Brush is invaluable in the home. Cleans Suits, Costumes, Gloves, Soft Hats, Upholstery, Curtains, etc., without fuss or mess. Simply fill with petrol and use like an ordinary brush. Sent with "Book of Hints on Dry Cleaning." Write for Folder.

Mutax CO. STRETFORD, MANCHESTER. 12/6 Post Free

Get one from your dealer or direct from us.

DEAF?

Electrical and non-electrical instruments selected by an expert to suit individual degrees of defective hearing, **with or without headband.**

Seven Days' Free Trial

Demonstrations given. Full particulars with descriptive catalogue sent on application.

Recommended by leading Aurists.

THE DEAF APPLIANCE CO., LTD. (Dept. S.M.), 58-60, Wigmore Street, London W.1

"Nature alone won't wave the hair, Hinde's Wavers, too, must do their share."

HINDE'S HAIR WAVERS are supplied in 26 different patterns. Crude imitations which are hurtful to the hair may be sometimes offered. It is necessary to see that the name HINDE'S is on each article. Obtainable at all stores, hairdressers and drapery houses.

SAMPLE WAVER 8d. POST FREE.

Hindes', Limited, Manufacturers of Hair Brushes and Articles for the Dressing Table. 1, Tabernacle Street, London, E.C. Works, Birmingham.

REMOVES OBJECTIONABLE HAIR GROWTH FROM THE ARMS.

Nothing is so repellant and so rudely disillusioning as a conspicuous masculine growth of hair on the slender graceful arms of a pretty woman. It instantly destroys all suggestion of feminine daintiness. With Veet, the new perfumed velvety cream, you can remove all hair growth as if by magic. Just spread it on as it comes from the tube, wait a few minutes, rinse it off and the hair is gone. Leaves the arms smooth, lovely and white. Satisfactory results guaranteed or money back. Veet may be obtained from all chemists hairdressers and stores for 3/6. Also sent post-paid in plain wrapper for 4/- (Trial size by post for 6d. in stamps.) Dae Health Laboratories (Dept. 49 L), 68, Bolsover Street, London, W.1.

VEET

A Perfumed Velvety Cream that Removes Hair.

Do You Look as Young as You Feel?

GREY hairs are a drawback in the lives of both men and women. Their appearance often marks a stopping point on the road to success either in business or in society.

However young you may feel, whatever may be your actual age, every grey hair is an added handicap.

The colour of your hair can be restored permanently by NUCTONE—a new scientific discovery which replaces the natural pigment of the hair, loss of which is the cause of greyness.

There is no sudden disturbing change when using NUCTONE, just a gradual restoration of colour and a healthy lustrous sheen to your hair.

NUCTONE is safe to use, and is guaranteed free from sulphur, lead and any other injurious ingredients.

Nuctone *for* GREY HAIR

NUCTONE for dark and medium hair.
NUCTONE ECLAIRE for fair and auburn shades.
NUCTONE CONCENTRE for Gentlemen's hair.

If you prefer expert application ask your Hairdresser for NUCTONE Grey Hair Treatment.

From all the leading Chemists, Hairdressers and Stores, 6/6 per bottle. Postage (inland) 6d. per bottle extra. If unobtainable in your locality write to the Wholesale Distributing Agents—

HENRY C. QUELCH & CO., 4/5, Ludgate Sq., London, E.C.4

43

CHOOSE YOUR GIFTS AT HOME DIRECT FROM FACTORY!

Here is a book whose pages are crammed with fascinating and useful Gifts for everyone—

IT'S FREE!

Write for it now to H. SAMUEL, and choose Gifts of life-long value at Factory prices that

SAVE POUNDS!

See the splendid lists of

FREE PRIZES for all buyers in the **FREE BOOK!**

Full Month's Trial any article

GOLD PENDANT Attractive new design, amazing value **15/-**

15/-

30/-

39/6

50/-

OVER 500 DIAMOND AND GEM-SET RINGS to choose from. Fine stones in latest settings from **15/-**

60/-

SOLID GOLD BRACELET WATCH. Fully jewelled lever movement. Accurately timed and adjusted. 10 years' warranty **60/-**

30/-

STERLING SILVER WATCH High-grade fully jewelled movement. Perfect timekeeper. 7 yrs. warranty **30/-**

OVERSEAS ORDERS *receive the prompt attention of a special manager. Catalogue mailed free.*

Catch the next post.

WRITE NOW!

H. SAMUEL LTD.

31, MARKET ST., MANCHESTER.

85 *Large Branches throughout the Kingdom.*
For Full List see advt. on page 15.

Triple-Proofed Gabardine Trench Coat

(The Famous Officers' Coat).

£2:0:0

Carriage paid by Parcel Post in U.K. or Irish Free State.

CURZON'S were the first to introduce this Coat at a popular price. When costs of material were high two years ago, we were selling this coat at 70/- when others were asking 90/- to 120/- This is a Coat for a lifetime, being absolutely storm-proof and weather-proof, and affording complete protection against the most inclement weather. The unique features are:—

1. It is lined with smart check plaid.
2. It is rubber interlined.
3. It has a detachable wool lining (for cold weather use) which can be fixed or removed in a minute.
4. All materials used in the production of this Coat are guaranteed fast dyes.

The lining can be removed without in any way affecting the smart appearance of the coat, and in this way can be worn in mild or rainy weather. The only coat on the market that answers the purpose of two or more coats. Post free on receipt of £2, under our guarantee to refund your money should the coat fail to give satisfaction. **These Coats can also be supplied in Navy Blue (guaranteed fast dye) at 45/- carriage paid.** When ordering give your height and chest measurement (taken over waistcoat).

Customers abroad please add 2/6 per coat extra to cover postage

SPECIAL NOTICE TO LADIES!

We only make the Coat in the one style as illustrated, but it is equally suitable for ladies, as many have ordered and expressed complete satisfaction.

Orders by post to be sent to

CURZON BROS., Ltd.,

The World's Measure Tailors,

New Head Depot:

36 & 37, NEW BRIDGE ST., LUDGATE CIRCUS, LONDON, E.C.4.

All the World knows It's "Curzon's" for Clothes

(40 Shops in London and Suburbs.)

When ordering mention "*Strand Magazine.*"

Put a

PERMANENT CREASE

in your trousers

You can do it with "Wray's Evercrease" in a few minutes. "Evercrease" is **safe, permanent** and **waterproof** —cannot harm any cloth and will keep your trousers smart all through their life. One tube of "Evercrease" will **permanently** crease three pairs of trousers. Price **1/6** per tube, light or dark, according to colour of cloth.

WRAY'S EVERCREASE

Obtainable from all leading Stores, Chemists, and Outfitters.

Or **1/8** post free from

E. S. WRAY & SON,
15, NEW ST., COVENT GARDEN,
LONDON, W.C.2.

Satisfaction— or Money refunded

SOLID GOLD HALL MARKED JEWELLED LEVER WATCH ON SOLID GOLD EXPANDING BRACELET ON MOIRÉ SILK STRAP

WARRANTED 10 YEARS

£3·10·0

£2·10·0

POST FREE

Test these Watches If not satisfied return within 7 days and money will be refunded

The **JATUR**

GENTS SOLID SILVER HALL MARKED, FULL SIZE POCKET LEVER FULLY JEWELLED, WHITE ENAMEL DIAL, WITH SILVER INNER CASE ACCURATE TIMEKEEPER WARRANTED 10 YEARS

21/- POST FREE

JAY & TURNER

Jewellers & Silversmiths.

69, FLEET STREET E.C.4.

LT.-COL. RICHARDSON'S *Police Airedales*

—specially Trained Against— **BURGLARS**

For LADIES' GUARDS.

Safe Children—Not Quarrelsome.

from **10 Gns.** **Pups 5 Gns.**

Wormley Hill, Broxbourne, Herts.

Tel.: 52 Broxbourne.

30 mins. from Liverpool Street, G.E.R.

"NEW RAPID"

TRAINING IN

SLOAN-DUPLOYAN SHORTHAND ENSURES RAPID PROMOTION.

Learned in 12 Easy Postal Lessons.

Handbook and Lesson Free.

63, HOLBORN HALL COLLEGE, LONDON - - - - - W.C.1.

Safety Users!

THE MONKEY STROP

Puts a Smile into Every Shave and saves buying new blades.

Every day a perfect shave and still the same blade after 6 months' daily use. Buy the

MONKEY STROP

the cheapest machine of its kind on the market—yet MOST efficient—putting the true keen 'Barber's' edge to your blades—**both sides at once**—in a few seconds by simply turning the handle. The only Strop which readily takes Gillette and any type of Blade. You can bring even discarded blades into perfect condition.

Improved Model with Plated Case 5/6
(Foreign Post Extra) .. ..

Satisfaction or Money Back. 75,000 already in use. Useful Xmas Present

From Cash Chemists, Ironmongers, Cutlers, Tobacconists & Hairdressers, or from Manufacturers. Export enquiries through London Shippers.

DOUGLAS KIRBY & CO. (Dept. S 7), **GLOUCESTER.**

The FAIRYCYCLE

(Patented and Regd. Design.)

Built like a Bike—but safer.

You can improve your children's health, build up their strength, and keep them amused for hours if you buy them a FAIRYCYCLE. It is strongly made and British made.

Note the low Centre of Gravity which makes the FAIRYCYCLE so safe and easy to ride.

Be sure there is a Brake and Free Wheel and the Triangle Trade Mark —none genuine without. **59/6**

SPECIFICATIONS: Adjustable plated handlebar, adjustable cycle saddle, mudguards, free wheel, brake, strong tubular frame of solid drawn weldless steel cycle tube, with back stays, ball-bearing rubber pedals, 12-in. wheels, with §-in. wired-on tyres.

Stocked by all good Toy Shops and Stores throughout Britain.

Look for the famous Triangle Trade Mark on all good Toys.

Manufacturers:

LINES BROS., LTD.,
9, FORE ST., LONDON, E.C.2.

For your children's safety make sure that the machine is a FAIRYCYCLE. Look for the word 'FAIRYCYCLE' on the frame.

AN OFFER TO PARENTS:

I will make myself responsible for your Children's future.

Ernest G. V. Clark,
Principal of
CLARK'S COLLEGE.

SEND A POSTCARD to Dept. 14 at the address below, asking for full particulars and advice

ENROL ANY DAY.
Term dates from First Lesson.

TO THE AMBITIOUS.

Clark's College will train you for a position wherever you live by means of specialised Postal Instruction for—

ACCOUNTANCY
SECRETARIAL and all **PROFESSIONAL EXAMS.**
ADVERTISING
SCRIPT SHORTHAND
the world's fastest system.

SEND A POSTCARD FOR full particulars of any Course in which you are interested.

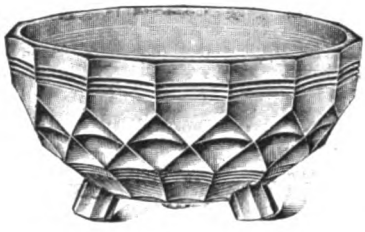
ENROL ANY DAY.
Term dates from First Lesson.

CLARK'S COLLEGE Ltd.

The Biggest Business Training College in the World,

126, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON, W.C.2, & 20 BRANCHES.

LANCASTRIAN CRYSTAL



When buying your glass insist upon seeing

Lancastrian Crystal

Obtainable at all the leading Stores

MOLINEAUX, WEBB & CO., Ltd.,
MANCHESTER.

100 Candle Power **'PIFCO' 4** Hours for 1d.
INCANDESCENT GAS LIGHT
with Common Paraffin.

SAFE AND SIMPLE. JUST USE A MATCH.
Beats Gas or Electric.

7 Days' Trial **FREE** Complete Lamp - - **30/-**

Send no Money. Write for Catalogue.

PIFCO, LTD.,
177, High Street, MANCHESTER.
STOCKED IN 37 DIFFERENT STYLES.

JELKS' HIGH-GRADE SECOND-HAND FURNITURE

For CASH or on EASY TERMS.
Half Cost and Double Wear of Cheap New Goods.
Jelks' second-hand furniture comes solely from good-class homes throughout the Kingdom. An ever-changing stock of absorbing interest.
£100,000 WORTH OF STOCK.
500,000 SQ. FT. OF FLOOR SPACE.
Call or write for New Monthly Bargain List.
W. JELKS & SONS, 263—275, HOLLOWAY ROAD, London, N.7. Depositories, 2 to 16, Eden Grove (adjoining).

THE AUTOMATIC SUGAR SPRINKLER

No Tipping — No Shaking

ALSO IN NICKEL SILVER AT 12/6 POST FREE.
SUGAR ALWAYS DRY AND CLEAN. CANNOT SPILL OVER.

THE UTILITY HUMAN-HAND DUSTER

A new labour-saving device that
MAKES DUSTING A PLEASURE.
GETS IN ANYWHERE.
CLEANS EVERYTHING.
The specially treated surface picks up the dust and does not scatter it.
POLISHES AS IT CLEANS.
Reaches spots inaccessible to the ordinary cloth or brush.
Made in two sizes, 18 ins. and 23 ins. long.
PRICE **1/5** and **1/11.** Postage **4d.**
British Manufacture. *Trade enquiries invited.*
UTILITIES DISTRIBUTING COMPANY
243, Upper Street, Islington, London, N.1

Broken Fireplaces are dangerous!
but are safely and easily repaired with
PLASTIC FIRE CEMENT
Purimachos
Ask your Ironmonger for it.
3lb. sample tin, **1/9** post free, with full particulars from
PURIMACHOS LTD., 16, St. Philip's, BRISTOL.

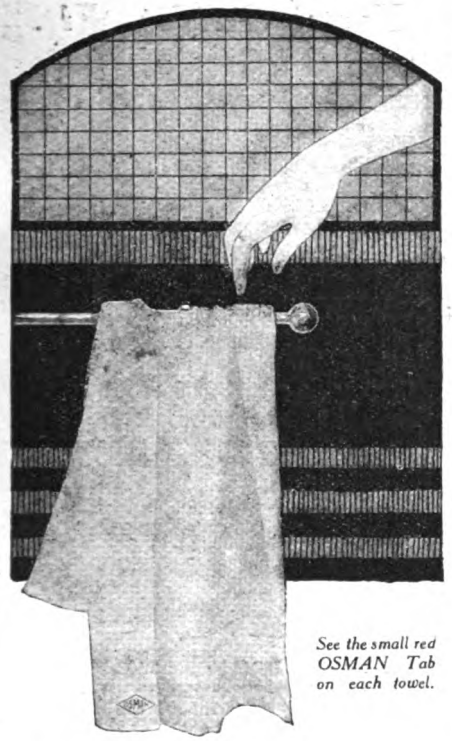
Bradford's PATENT VICTRESS-VOWEL WASHING, WRINGING & MANGLING MACHINE COMBINED.

With wood rollers, 21in. by 4½in. A handy family size, equal to washing one blanket or eight shirts at one time. Occupies very little space. No internal mechanism to get out of order.
SPECIAL PRICE FOR LIMITED PERIOD.
Delivered to nearest railway station.

BRADFORD'S "V.C." COMBINED TABLE AND WRINGER AND MANGLE.
Rollers 21in. by 4½in., of best English Hardwood.
When not in use as mangle, forms a convenient table, 34in. by 18in. Folding handle.
No. 2, **£5 17s. 6d.** net, cash with order.
Carriage Free to nearest station.

Full particulars of other types and sizes of Washing, Wringing and Mangling Machines are given in Cat. No. 96F. Free copy on request.

THOMAS BRADFORD & CO., Makers,
141, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.
130, Bold Street, Liverpool. 1, Deansgate, Manchester.



See the small red OSMAN Tab on each towel.

Look well—wear well—wash well—

Softness, absorption and good looks—all qualities which endure in OSMAN Towels.

When next you buy towels take a hint from the leading West End Hotels which have bought OSMAN Towels for fifty years.

The pure whiteness and unusual softness of OSMAN Towels are not destroyed by washing—they never become harsh or yellow. You can send them time after time to the laundry knowing full well that they will come back as white and soft as ever.

OSMAN

TOWELS AND BATH-SHEETS

cost no more than the ordinary kind. The range of sizes is extensive and complete. Ask to see a sample.

From all leading Drapers, Stores and House Furnishers

Q 5

GOLDSMITHS SAQUI & LAWRENCE

SAQUI & LAWRENCE 28-30 LIVERPOOL ST Opposite Great Eastern Hotel

Xmas Gifts at Manufacturer's Prices

Choose your Gifts at Saqui & Lawrence's

A Gift of Jewellery or a Watch from SAQUI & LAWRENCE is a happy token of a life-long esteem, and the giver benefits enormously by purchasing at

Manufacturer's Prices

that show a big saving. Call to-day or order by post.

Write for Free Art Catalogue.

Diamond Half-hoop Ring, 18-ct. Gold **70/-**
Usually **£5**

Diamond Cross-over 18-ct. Gold mount **80/-**
Usually **£6**

Exquisite Diamond Cluster, 18-ct. Gold mount **£7**
Usually **£10**

Solid Gold Watch Bracelet, fully jewelled lever movement. 10 years' warranty. **56/-**
Usually **84/-**

CALL EARLY

A FULL MONTH'S APPROVAL ALLOWED

Gold Brooch set with AquaCrystals, **20/-**
Usually **30/-**

32/-
Usually **42/-**
Sterling Silver Lever, Five-jewelled keyless lever movement. Fully warranted.

Principal Branches:
LONDON:
28-30 LIVERPOOL ST.
Opp. Gt. Eastern Hotel
PICCADILLY CIRCUS
Cr. Shaftesbury Av.
54, STRAND
19 doors East of Charing X Station.
HAMMERSMITH
3A, King Street.
29, Broadway.
KING'S CROSS
276, Pentonville Road.
MANCHESTER
17, Piccadilly.
EDINBURGH
36 & 64, Leith Street.
BRISTOL
31, Wine Street.
EASTBOURNE
110, Terminus Road.
BOURNEMOUTH
39, Old Christ'ch Road.

Saqui & Lawrence LTD.

London's Largest Jewellers.
Branches throughout the Kingdom.

The AWLYN

Keeps Your Outfit Fit.

Perfectly Constructed in Oak, Light, Dark, Fumed or Antique **22 Gns.** or in rich Mahogany **26 Gns.**

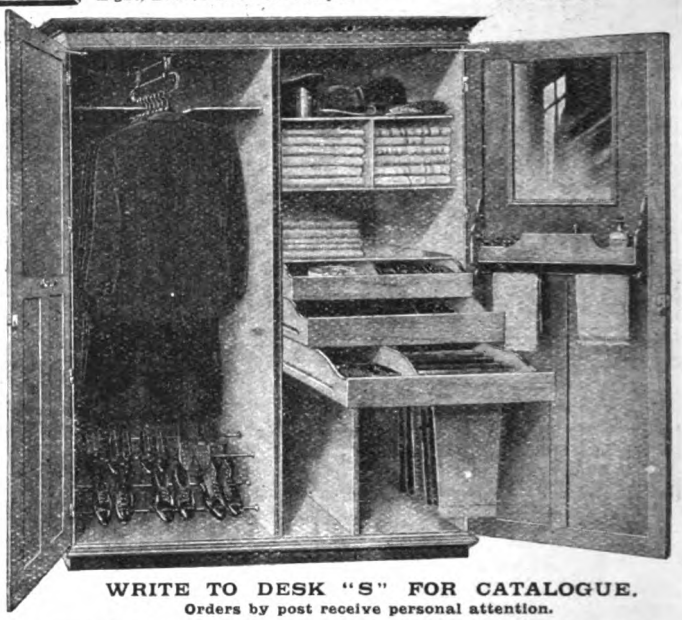
The Ideal Gentlemen's Wardrobe.

DIMENSIONS.
Height 6 ft. 5 in.
Width 4 ft. 6 in.
Depth 1 ft. 10 in.

"A Place for Everything—Everything in its Place."

It accommodates 12 Suits, 6 Hats, 24 Shirts, 12 Suits Underwear, 12 Suits Pyjamas, 3 doz. each Collars, Handkerchiefs and Socks, 8 pr. Boots, Suitcase, &c.

THE AWLYN JUNIOR
(A smaller size)
Height 6 ft.
Width 3 ft. 6 in.
Depth 1 ft. 8 in.
In Oak, Light, Dark, Fumed or Antique **16 Gns.**
Or Mahogany ... ... **19 Gns.**



CARRIAGE PAID HOME.

WRITE TO DESK "S" FOR CATALOGUE.
Orders by post receive personal attention.

DOWNINGS 61, 62, 49, 50, 51 & 36, LONDON ROAD, ELEPHANT & CASTLE, LONDON, S.E.1. *Opposite Bakerloo Tube Stn.*

Cleaned with
CHIVERS' CLOTH BALL

which smartens the colours and freshens the cloth so that it looks like new. Cleans Clothes; removes Grease, Ink and Stains. *Sold by all dealers, or send for full size sample, post free* 9d.
F. CHIVERS & CO., LTD., 1, Albany Works, Bath.

LUXURIOUS BABY CARS
AT BARGAIN PRICES.

EXHIBITION STOCK. **SENT ON APPROVAL BEFORE PURCHASE.** Ball Bearing wheels, Motor Panelled Body 39ins. Mudguards, etc. Call or write. **6½ & 8 Gns.**
UNIVERSAL SUPPLY ASSOCIATION,
Chapter House,
Salisbury Sq., Fleet St., London, E.C.4.

"For an outlay of 2/9 I have saved £10."
Burns's Income-Tax Guide
NEW EDITION. 2/9 post free.
(Former editions under title of "Chambers's Income-Tax Guide.")
Simple in form and language. Special Chapters on Clergy, Business Incomes, Farmers, Weekly Wage-Earners, Super-Tax, etc.
SIMPKINS & CO., 4, Stationers' Hall Court, London; W. GREEN & SON, St. Giles Street, Edinburgh.

OLD HATS MADE NEW
AND REMODELLED TO PRESENT FASHION.

Send your old **VELOUR, FELT,** or **BEAVER** Hat to the Renovating Expert—**A. WRIGHT, of Luton.** His clever workers will quickly renovate, re-model, and return it. Send for Free Catalogue of **80 Styles** of latest fashionable shapes. Ladies can then choose the design to which they wish their old hat remodelled. The cost is only **2/9** to **4/3.** *(If required, hats can be re-dyed to darker colours, preference should be given to Black, Navy, or Nigger, at an extra cost of* **1/6** *each.)* Gent.'s Hats also renovated—**4/6** to **6/-.** We are the largest Hat Renovators in the Country.

Satisfaction Guaranteed or Money Refunded.

Special Terms to Trade Enquiries. Agents Wanted.

A. WRIGHT
(Dept. 20), Albert Road, LUTON.

This is the Glove for Wintry Wear with Fresh-Air Folk. It brings cosy finger-tip warmth to such chilly jobs as Winter Motoring, Driving, Skating, Tramping, etc.

"LAMMIE" GAUNTLETS
HAND-SEWN PELTS WITH THE NATURAL FLEECE INSIDE.

Light Buff, or Brown. Built for hard Country wear. The wide Gauntlet, with its Fleece turn-over, fits well over the coat sleeve and makes the Cold stay outside.

17/6 post free.

Send P.Order for **17/6** with name and full address. Say whether for man or lady and give ordinary glove size. Full money back *immediately* if you wish to return the gloves.

J. BARBOUR & SONS, Ltd.
19a. Beacon B'ld'gs, So. Shields.

Send him, or her, a pair for Xmas.

They will clean up and last for years as a reminder of your kindly thought.

The thick, warm natural Fleece *keeps green* inside the supple glove hide.

FORESIGHT

IT is only the rich who can follow the swallows and winter abroad. The rest of us must adapt ourselves to the vagaries of our climate.

And if we must do so, we may as well make a pleasure of a necessity, and do it in the Pesco way, for this fine Underwear gives one the warmth and comfort of a sunny clime, and amidst the rigours of winter the security one feels on a balmy day in spring.

To winter in its pure wool textures is by no means a hardship. Pesco has a tonic influence on health, and is one of the good things of life which all can afford and enjoy.

PURE WOOL, or SILK and WOOL

Pesco

ASK FOR PESCO!
SCOTCH — AND BEST

Obtainable everywhere. Every garment guaranteed unshrinkable. In case of difficulty write for names of nearest agents.

PETER SCOTT & CO., LTD., DEPT. 5, HAWICK . . . . . SCOTLAND

TRADE MARK. F12

TO THE DEAF

All that is seen of it.

THOUSANDS of deaf persons are now hearing again by using the **Danjhill Earphone** with the improved Earpiece attachment.

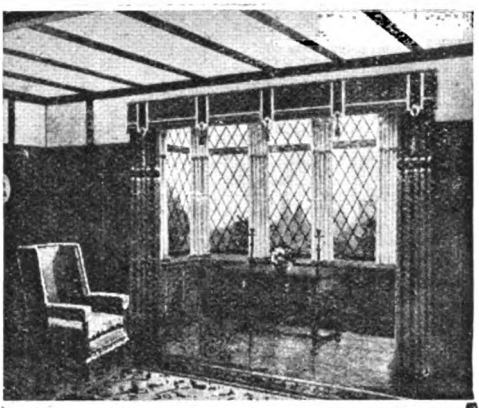
Read what users say:—

"Please find instalment for Danjhill Earphone and earpiece attachment. I am finding the same a very great help to me."

"It is a very wonderful instrument and I am very pleased with it, as it is years since I heard things so clearly."

Send a postcard for full particulars and trial terms now. Sent free.

D. & J. HILL, Ltd.,
204, Danjhill House, 267, Gray's Inn Road, King's Cross, London. *'Phone, 1973 Museum. Manchester Branch: 24, The Park, Eccles. New Zealand: Mr. S. Barry, 290, Queen St., Auckland.*



Send To-day for Post Free Patterns

They will reveal the wonderful possibilities for distinctive treatments of real charm afforded by

ALLEN'S FADELESS Durobelle
THE ORIGINAL PERMANENT DYE

Replaced Free if Colours Fade.

The delightful colours make dull rooms cheerful, while for those sunny rooms Durobelle is ideal. You can choose from an immense range of shades and textures with the assurance of free replacement if colours fade through sun, sea-air or washing

Casement Cloths, Cream, 28 ins. wide, **1/0½** yd.; 31 ins., **1/3½** yd.; 50 ins., **1/6½** yd. Beautiful Art Shades, 28 ins., **1/3½** yd.; 31 ins., **1/11½** yd.; 50 ins., **2/4½** yd.

Bolton Sheetings, Cream, 50 ins. wide, **3/3½** yd.; nine lovely colours, **3/11½** yd.

Reps, Mattings, Canvas and Corded Cloths, 50 ins. wide, from **3/11** yd.

Rich Chenilles, reversible, 50 in. wide, **8/11** yd.

Coloured Madras Muslins, cream grounds with charming designs in colour, 50 in. wide, from **2/11½** yd.

"MY LADY'S HOME,"

Allen's famous colour book, contains hundreds of beautiful colour photographs of distinctive Furnishing Fabrics, Carpets, Rugs, etc. Excellent value is featured throughout. WRITE FOR A COPY NOW.

LOVELY ALLEN CRETONNES, the choicest productions of their kind, from **1/0½** yd. Pattern range loaned free.

J. J. Allen Ltd

DEPARTMENT A, BOURNEMOUTH.
London: 188, Sloane Street, S.W.
All letters to Bournemouth, please.

THE ONLY **NOISELESS** TYPEWRITER
IN THE WORLD

NOISELESS PORTABLE

A Boon in the home

Peace is priceless

NOISELESS STANDARD

A Blessing in the Office

THE NOISELESS TYPEWRITER COMPANY
OUTER TEMPLE 222-225 STRAND
LONDON W·C·2

Opposite the Law Courts — Phone Nº. CENTRAL 8098

SHORTHAND

Send for free copy of sixpenny book The **SLOAN-DUPLOYAN** System saves a year's study, and ranks first for high speed. Used on Parliamentary Reporting Staff. Postage 2d.

SLOAN-DUPLOYAN HEADQUARTERS, (Dept. A), RAMSGATE.

ART FASHION DRAWING.
LEARN THIS INTERESTING ART AND EARN BIG MONEY
POSTER, BLACK AND WHITE, STORY ILLUSTRATING also taught. LESSONS GIVEN at Studios Morning, Afternoon or Evening, or by post. Help given to good positions. Sketches bought and sold. Terms:—SECRETARY,
THE COMMERCIAL ART SCHOOL
12 & 13, HENRIETTA STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2. *Est.* 1900.

Give this ROAD BOOK for XMAS.

GREAT BRITAIN.
Deluxe edition for presentation, in handsome leather binding, red-gold edges. India paper, 2000 MAPS AND PLANS. 25/- net.

'CONTOUR' BOOKS, Cheap Editions, 2/- to 10/6, at all Booksellers.

GALL & INGLIS, 31 Henrietta Str., London, W.C.2 And Edinburgh.

10/6 POST FREE

CYCLISTS' LIGHTING SET.
Complete Electric Lighting Set for Pedal Cyclists can be fitted to any machine in a few minutes. Simply switch on when required. The Battery will last with ordinary use for over three months (replacement battery **2/6** from all electricians).
We have sold thousands of these sets; they are the best Britain can produce. Our guarantee—your money refunded if not satisfied—goes with every sale.
Trade Enquiries Invited.
ROBERT AUSTIN & CO., Dept. S, Maritime Buildings, Middlesbro

Meltis (Regd.)

CHOCOLATE ASSORTMENTS
"Supreme" - "Gaiety" - "King George" etc.

Heirs to a delicious secret

WILKINSON'S of Pontefract have inherited a wonderful secret from their ancestors—how to make the sweetest, most succulent, most delicious Pontefract Cakes. Compounded of the very finest ingredients, including the best liquorice, the making of Wilkinson's Pontefract Cakes—like many another old-fashioned recipe—is as simple as it is excellent. But—just how to make it is a secret—possessed only by Wilkinsons.

Wilkinson's "PERFECTED" Pontefract Cakes

Made in Wilkinson's Britannia Refinery, Pontefract, the home of the Liquorice Cake, where scrupulous modern methods ensure a higher standard of purity and wholesomeness than even in the "good old days."

Most shops keep Wilkinson's. The best shops stock none other. Sold loose and in ¼ and ½ lb. sealed green tins.

W. R. WILKINSON & CO., PONTEFRACT

10

HOW TO SPEAK FRENCH LIKE A FRENCHMAN.

Remarkable Tribute to New Pelman Method of Learning Languages.

"*I CAN say without any hesitation whatever that I have derived wonderful benefit from the work I have done under your guidance.*"

This statement occurs in the course of a letter received by the Pelman Languages Institute from one who, having taken the Pelman *French Course* and derived "wonderful benefit" from it, *is now learning German* by the same method.

"It is best," continues the writer, "to rely upon the testimony of Frenchmen themselves in this matter, and I am sure that you will be pleased to hear that on very many occasions I have been complimented by them on the facility with which I express myself in their language without any apparent realisation that I am using a 'foreign' language at all.

"Many Frenchmen have said that they find it difficult to believe that anybody could attain such a facility in carrying on a discussion in French without a prolonged residence in the country, which I certainly have never had.

"Before I worked through your Course . . . the simplest letter was a task, to be painfully worried through. But now

"I can write a letter in French with as little hesitation as I should write in English;

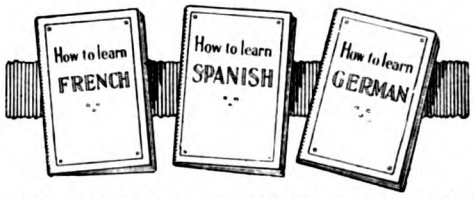
and not only with as little hesitation, but also with as much confidence that what I do write is correct, and is pretty much the same as a Frenchman would write in similar circumstances.

Taken for a Frenchman.

"As evidence of this, I may mention that on more than one occasion, when we have been visited by one of our French business friends (the majority of whom have very little useful English), and I happen to have been absent, they have asked *whether our French correspondent could not act as interpreter*, and when they have been informed that we do not employ a Frenchman to conduct our French correspondence, they have replied:—

'*But surely you have! Who is it then who writes to us?*'

A pretty little tribute to the Pelman method, I think."



This wonderful new method has now been applied to three languages (FRENCH, SPANISH and GERMAN), and is explained in three little books (one for each language). You can obtain a copy of any one of these books gratis and post free by applying for it to-day. Write to the Pelman Languages Institute, 32, Bloomsbury Mansions, Hart Street, London, W.C.1, asking for particulars of the French Course, the German Course, or the Spanish Course. A copy of the book, giving you full particulars of the particular Course about which you require information, will be sent you by return, **gratis and post free.**

DR. SCHOLL'S BUNION REDUCER
relieves the inflamed area from pressure, prevents shoe bulging, and reduces the enlargement. Men's and women's sizes. Rights and Lefts, 2/6 each.

Dr Scholl's
Foot Comfort Appliances

are worn comfortably and unobserved in the usual footwear. Designed on strictly anatomical lines they can be adjusted to individual needs. Scholl Appliances instantly relieve and permanently correct all foot troubles.

DR. SCHOLL'S ZINO PADS. Made in corn, bunion, and callous sizes. Prevent rubbing, pressure, and friction. Self-adhesive — no strapping. **Put one on—the pain is gone.** Price per packet .. **1/3**

DR. SCHOLL'S FOOT-EAZER affords instant relief to tired, aching feet, weak ankles or flat foot, etc. Worn comfortably in your ordinary shoes. Price per pair **10/6**

Dr. Scholl's Foot Book Free on request.

THE SCHOLL MFG. CO., LTD., 2, Giltspur Street, London, E.C.1.

A man chiefly admires in a woman her femininity.

Scores of women who are not beautiful have a greater power of attraction than the possessors of pretty faces. Their dainty femininity is more admired and lasts longer than all the good looks in the world. That is why YOU should immediately obtain the aid of

DECOLTENE The liquid hair remover

to rid you of all traces of masculinity. Tiny hairs on the face and thicker growths elsewhere materially detract from the dainty charm you can so easily possess by using DECOLTENE. *Guaranteed* harmless and odourless and *proved* to be painless. Large sized bottle **3/9**

Robartes' guaranteed preparations are obtainable at Boots, Taylor's Drug Stores, Sefridges and all Chemists, Perfumers, etc., or post free direct from Robartes (1922), Ltd.

DIADEM
TOOTH PASTE

An entirely new antiseptic tooth paste which is particularly refreshing and without equal for cleansing, preserving and whitening the teeth. Per tube **1/3**

Write for Dinkie booklet. Invaluable to all smart women.

ROBARTES

Dinkie *The Dainty Deodorant*

is a fragrant cream guaranteed not to stain the most delicate materials. It at once relieves you of all suggestion of offensive body odours. Per jar **2/6**

(1922) Ltd. (Dept. S.T.), 14 & 15 Southampton Buildings, W.C.2.

A Sniff Relieves Headache

SUTTON'S

For Washing Woollens

Cloudy Ammonia.

Sole Manufacturers: G. F. Sutton Sons & Co., Osborne Works, King's Cross, London, N.7.

THINGS OF THE PAST !!

UNSIGHTLY HIGH BOOTS ABOLISHED.

APPLIANCES NOW BEING SUPPLIED TO WOUNDED SOLDIERS UNDER GOVERNMENT CONTRACT.

Pamphlet **FREE** to all mentioning THE STRAND MAGAZINE. Send particulars of your case. Address:

THE O'CONNOR EXTENSION CO., LTD., SURGICAL BOOT SPECIALISTS
(Booklet N),
2, BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

NEW IDEAS FOR YOUR *Xmas Decorations*

SEND FOR THIS 32p BOOK OF PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

Do not fail to obtain a copy of "Dennison's Christmas Book" this year. It is profusely illustrated in colours, contains many entirely new and original ideas for home and general interior decorations, games, parties, etc.—just the book you need for a really merry Xmas. Your friends will be delighted. Price 6d. Send stamps to address below or

Ask Your Stationer for

Dennison's XMAS BOOK

Dennison Manufacturing Co., Ltd.
THE TAG MAKERS
(Dept. 1), 52, KINGSWAY, LONDON, W.C.2.

The WORLD'S FINEST CLOCKWORK TRAIN

A finer or better-looking clockwork train than a Hornby Train was never produced.

PERFECT MECHANISM

The engine contains the strongest, best-built piece of clockwork mechanism that ever sent a train dashing round its track.

BEAUTIFUL FINISH

The quality and finish of the Hornby Clockwork Trains are unique and distinctive. Beautifully enamelled in colours, they present a very superior appearance. All the Meccano Stations, Bridges, Trucks, etc., are finished in the same high-class way.

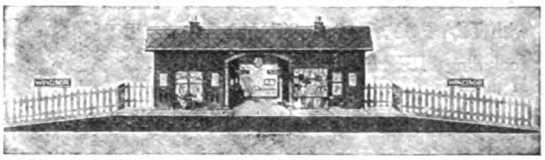
STANDARDISED PARTS.

A most valuable and remarkable feature of the Hornby Train is that it can be taken to pieces and rebuilt, just like a Meccano model. All the parts are standardised, and there is as much fun taking Loco, Tender, Wagon, and Coaches to pieces and rebuilding them as there is in playing with them. Any lost or damaged parts may be replaced with new ones.

A HORNBY TRAIN LASTS FOR EVER!

TRAIN ACCESSORIES

THERE are new Wagons, Signals, Lamps, Stations, Turntables, this year, all built in correct relationship as regards size, gauge, method of coupling, etc., with the Hornby Trains. Most important of all, they have the uniformly beautiful finish which is the great feature of the Hornby system.



THE WINDSOR STATION is a thing of beauty—the only really British station obtainable. Its bright colouring and realistic appearance will bring joy to the heart of every boy who sees it.

MECCANO RAILS, POINTS, AND CROSSINGS are made of the finest materials and hold together rigidly. Low in price, and obtainable from all dealers.

FREE TO BOYS

A SPLENDID NEW MECCANO BOOK

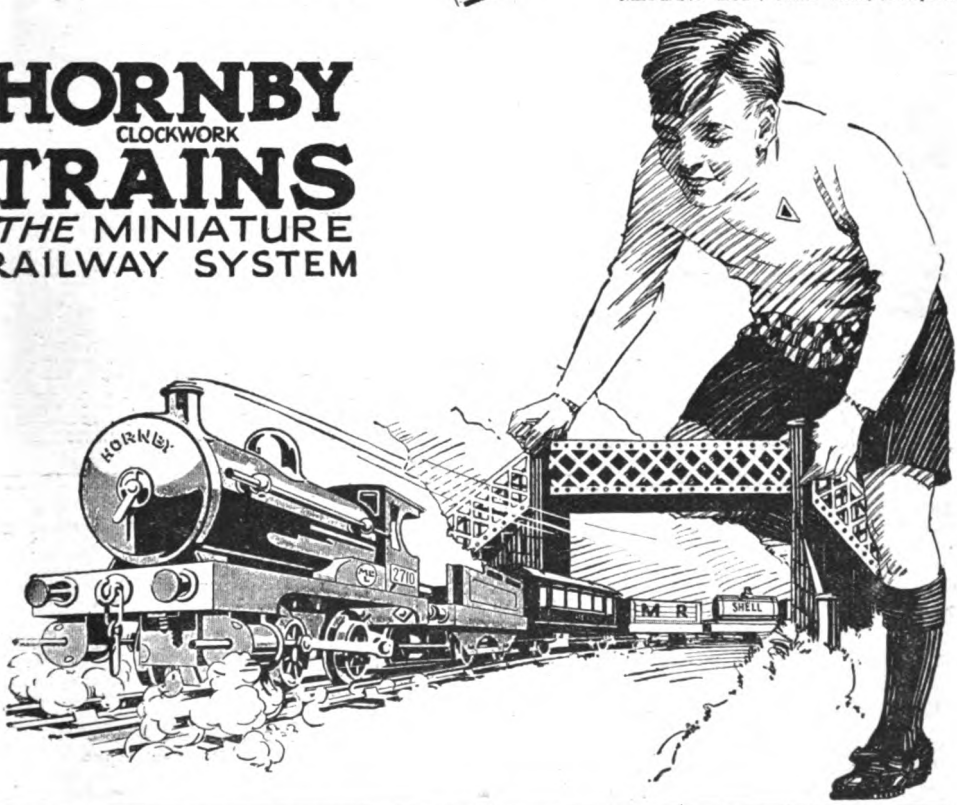
This is a new and splendidly illustrated book that tells of all the good things that come from Meccanoland, where the best toys are manufactured. No boy should be without this wonderful book.

HOW TO GET A FREE COPY

Just show this advertisement to three chums, and send us their names and addresses with your own. Address your letter to Dept. AZ, MECCANO LTD., Binns Road, Liverpool.

HORNBY CLOCKWORK TRAINS

THE MINIATURE RAILWAY SYSTEM



MECCANO LIMITED . BINNS ROAD . . LIVERPOOL

BUY DIRECT FROM THE POTTERIES.

FINEST SEMI-CHINA

TEA SET 6 Persons 21 Pieces

with TEA POT, JUG, & STAND TO MATCH

Including **FREE GIFT** of High-Class Metal Mount to Fit Jug.

POST FREE for **20/-** THE LOT

TEA SET ONLY **POST FREE 12/6**

YUAN Pattern.

Pretty Blue Colour. Lovely thin Cups and rich glaze finish.

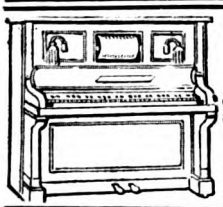
Art Catalogue sent FREE.

Showing a variety of patterns that can always be matched.

HOME SUPPLY POTTERY CO.

(Proprietors: A. Young & Co., Dept. S.M.),

Central Works, Mill Street, Hanley, Staffs.



ELECTRIC PIANOS

can be played by hand as an ordinary piano.

SOLD FOR CASH or EASY TERMS.

KEITH PROWSE

38, Berners Street, W1

NOSES.—The best patent Nose Machines in the world. Improve ugly noses of all kinds. Scientific yet simple. Can be worn during sleep.

Send stamped envelope for full particulars.

RED NOSES.—My long-established medically approved Treatment absolutely cures red noses. 4/- post free. Foreign, 1/6 extra.

UGLY EARS.—My Improved Rubber Ear Caps remedy ugly outstanding ears. Hundreds of successful cases. 7/6 post free. Foreign, 1/6 extra.

C. LEES RAY, Specialist, 10, JERMYN ST., LONDON, S.W.1.

ARE YOU UNABLE TO WALK?

Here is good news for you. The Jas. P. Witham *Hand Propelled* machines provide those who cannot walk with a splendid means of locomotion.

Any style of seat.

Fitted with special hill-climbing gear.

Fitted with free wheel and 2-speed gear, perfect in construction, they are thoroughly reliable and world-famed for ease of running and hill-climbing.

HAND-TRICYCLES from £25.

IF YOU CANNOT WALK

write for interesting particulars of these splendid machines, also *Indoor* and *Motor* chairs. As perfected and built by one himself unable to walk. Address—

The Jas. P. WITHAM Co.,

Invalid Chair Specialists,

20, Pyle House, Newport, ISLE OF WIGHT.

British Presents for British Kiddies

Period **DOLL FURNITURE** *Scale Model*

BEAUTIFUL Sets of Chippendale, Queen Anne or Jacobean Styles made to scale and to suit all pockets. We put quality first but Period Doll Furniture also appeals on the ground of price. It is so strongly and beautifully made that it will give pleasure to the kiddies for years to come and teach them to appreciate the difference between good British products and foreign. Packed in strong boxes 11″×11″×2½″.

Price 9/6 per Set.

There are Four Different Sets.

If unobtainable locally, furniture will be sent direct and necessary arrangements made with nearest dealer.

LINES BROS., Ltd., 9, FORE STREET, LONDON, E.C.2.

PIANO MADE EASY

AN entirely new way of learning to play the Piano, Harmonium, or American Organ. No teacher required. No tedious practising. No music to buy. Can be thoroughly mastered by anyone in a few weeks without previous knowledge. Suitable for either adults or children. Simple as A B C. Over 169,000 sold. Money returned if not as stated.

Mrs. B., Shipley writes: "I received your method, and think it splendid."

Mr. H. D., London, writes: "Your tutor is in every respect what it is advertised to be, and is extremely satisfactory."

Hundreds of other Testimonials received.

Diagram and full directions complete, post free **2/8** per Postal Order.

Can only be obtained direct from

THE IMPERIAL PUBLISHING CO. (B Dept.), 28, SOUTH CASTLE STREET, LIVERPOOL.

Singing Made Easy, **3/1.** Violin in Twelve Easy Lessons, **3/1.** The New Hand Developer for Pianists Violinists, &c., **2/9.**

Give your home an ALADDIN LAMP

Cottage Model.

IN the Season of gift-making, your own home is well worthy of remembrance. It will respond gratefully to the gift of an Aladdin Mantle Lamp by creating for you a brighter, more cheerful and inexpensive light.

The Aladdin Mantle Lamp burns common paraffin. It radiates 80 candle power, pure, soft, white light—the best and least harmful known to science. It lights at the wick like an ordinary lamp and burns without noise. No smoke or smell. No pumping up—cannot explode. Simple to use; nothing to get out of order. Extremely economical, because it burns 94 per cent. air. Proved to cost less than ½d. an hour.

10 Days' FREE TRIAL

Simply and solely to let you see for yourself what a wonderful light the Aladdin really is, we will send you free of all cost an Aladdin Table Lamp for 10 days' free trial. If you are not completely satisfied after 10 days' use that the Aladdin Mantle Lamp is far and away the best light in every way that you have ever seen, you can send it back to us.

Aladdin MANTLE LAMPS

GET YOURS FREE Write for 10 days' free trial, and learn how to get your Aladdin FREE.

DISTRIBUTORS WANTED to demonstrate the Aladdin in territory where oil lamps are used. Let us show you how to earn £100 a month. Write quickly for territory and samples.

£200 REWARD will be given to anyone showing us an oil lamp equal to the Aladdin in every way. (Details of this offer given in our circular.)

ALADDIN INDUSTRIES, LTD.,
5, Aladdin Buildings, 156, Southwark Street, London, S.E.

COUGHS & COLDS

Bronchitis, Asthma, Influenza, Catarrh and Hay Fever instantly relieved and rapidly cured by

GLYKALINE

Sold all over the world at 1/3, 3/-, 5/- and 11/6 by all Chemists and Stores, or post free direct from

LEATH & ROSS, 293, HIGH ROAD, BRONDESBURY, LONDON, N.W.6.
Tel. Hampstead 1174.

Fine for Neuralgia

Musterole ensures quick relief from neuralgia. When those sharp pains go shooting through your head, just rub a little of this clean, white ointment on your temples and neck.

Musterole is made with oil of mustard, but will not burn or blister like the old-fashioned mustard plaster.

Use Musterole for coughs, colds (it often prevents pneumonia), sore throat, congestion, pleurisy and rheumatism.

BETTER THAN A MUSTARD PLASTER

MILLER'S MUSTEROLE WILL NOT BLISTER

Thos. Christy & Co., London

TAN-SAD

TOY PRAMS AND SCOOTERS

ROSY cheeks, healthy appetites and sound sleep are the benefits conferred by Tan-Sad Toys.

Boys and girls alike hugely enjoy Tan-Sad Scooters—there is the 3-wheel "security" model (the tricycle of scooters) **22/6**; and the 2-wheel model for sturdy schoolboys, **15/-**.

And every little girl is proud to take her dolls for long airings in a Tan-Sad Toy Pram—just like the one Mother has for Baby. Prices:—**9/-, 15/-, 28/-** and **30/-**.

Before you buy your Xmas gifts, see the Tan-Sad Toys at your local dealer's or send for the free leaflet "What every youngster wants" to:—

TAN-SAD, LTD., Maple Works, Freeman Street, BIRMINGHAM.

TAN-SAD SCOOTERS.

Soundly constructed from best mild steel, fitted with wooden footboards and handles. Every model is highly finished and fitted with 10" Headley-Fulton tubular spoke unbreakable wheels, with half-inch wired-on tyres. Fold flat very simply. Nothing to get out of order.

TAN-SAD TOY PRAMS

are constructed on similar lines to the well-known Tan-Sad Prams for Children. Sprung "just like Mother's"; beautifully upholstered in assorted colours. Fold perfectly flat.

BUY DIRECT FROM THE POTTERIES

Christmas Gifts which you can rely upon.

Nothing so annoys the good housewife as to have to set before her Christmas guests a "make-up" of odd china. Every Christmas table will be brightened by a service of the Rock Pottery Co., whose choice designs, dignified and colourful, are famous in every part of the country. Order now and make sure that your china cupboard will be equal to the calls of even the largest Christmas parties.

Ye Olde WILLOW WARE

TEA-SET 21 PIECES for 6 Persons with Teapot, Stand and Jug to match - **18/6** Post Free U.K.

Finest Semi-Porcelain, richly glazed china finish—quaint antique shapes. Dark Blue Willow Pattern.

55-piece Combination Tea and Dinner Service **48/-** Carr. Paid G.B.

Send for Art Catalogue in colour (post free) illustrating complete range of Breakfast, Tea, Dinner and Toilet Ware in beautiful designs which can always be replaced.

Safe Delivery Guaranteed. We specialize in Export Orders.

THE ROCK POTTERY Co.,

PARK WORKS, BURSLEM, STAFFS. G 8

The "ADAPTA" Bed-Table

(Patented)

AN IDEAL XMAS GIFT

Can be instantly raised, lowered, or inclined. It extends over bed, couch, or chair without touching it, and is the ideal Table for reading or taking meals in bed with ease and comfort. By pressing a button the top can be adjusted to various inclinations. It cannot overbalance. Comprises Bed Table, Reading Stand, Writing Table, Bed Rest, Card Table, etc. British made.

No. 1.—Enamelled Metal Parts, with Polished Wood Top **£3 3 0**

No. 3.—Ditto, with Adjustable Side Tray, Automatic Book Holders, and Polished Oak Top (*as illustrated*) **£5 0 0**

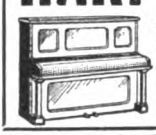
No. 5.—Complete as No. 3, but with Detachable Candle Sconce, and all Metal Parts finished Polished Brass ... **£7 7 0**

Carriage Paid in Great Britain. **Write for Booklet A3.**

J. FOOT & SON, Ltd.,

171, NEW BOND STREET, LONDON, W.1

HARPER PIANOS



39 Gns. Cash or 24/6 Monthly.

10 Years' signed Warranty. Finest Value at Moderate Prices. Write for Illustrated List to the actual Manufacturers—

HARPER PIANO CO., LTD., 256/262, HOLLOWAY ROAD, N.7

FREE! ABSOLUTELY FREE!

To introduce our new catalogue we are offering this genuine 9ct. gold-filled signet ring, for mere cost of engraving. Every ring beautifully hand engraved with two initials and guaranteed five years. Cash refunded in full if unsatisfactory. Send P.O. for **1/6** (post 1½d) with size of finger to **SIMS & MAYER** (Dept. S.M.), 418-422, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

ESTABLISHED 15 YEARS.

A Useful Gift this Christmas

The "SAXONIA" INCANDESCENT OIL LAMP

gives a light equal to City Gas or Electric Light, and at less cost.

TABLE LAMP, 27/6; also Hanging, Bracket, and Hand Lamps.

Give 85 c.p. for 15 hours on a quart of paraffin.

No Pump. No Pressure.

HARRIS UNDERHILL & CO., Colston Avenue, BRISTOL.
(Proprietors: Canadian Importers, Ltd.)

Let your Xmas Gift lighten her work

Give her an "Easiwork" Tea Wagon. It carries a complete meal in one journey from kitchen to dining room. It saves her hundreds of steps.

Two oak trays. Strong metal legs. Our exclusive patent 4-inch rubber-tyred swivel acting wheels. Easily carried down steps or run over thickest carpet. Finished in dark or medium oak.

Size 25in. by 17in. ... **£2-2-0**
Carriage paid.

Size 32in. by 16in., £2-18-6. Carriage paid.

"EASIWORK," Ltd. (Rooms 41-48), 403, Oxford Street, (Over Lloyd's Bank), London, W.1

'Easiwork' Ltd.

Perhaps she would like an "Easiwork" Kitchen Cabinet? Write or call for Free Copy of the Christmas Number of "Easiwork News." Has suggestions for other "labour-saving" presents.

Foster Clark's

It's the Creamiest Custard

"B-P," One of Britain's Finest Brands of Woollen Underwear.

Prices a revelation

DIRECT FROM WEAVER TO WEARER. ELIMINATING MIDDLEMEN.

By buying "B-P" Brand underwear direct from the proprietors you obtain finest quality goods, with a satisfaction-or-money-back guarantee, at prices which are unsaddled by middlemen's profits.

GUARANTEED PURE WOOL COMBINATIONS AND VESTS. High, low round, or "V" necks; long, short, or no sleeves.

ENID Super quality, winter weight combinations .. .. **13/6** POST FREE.

Vests 8/6. O.S. 1/- extra.

"PRINCESS" quality, winter weight combinations 8/6. Vests 6/-. O.S. 1/- extra. State size and enclose cash when ordering. Carriage paid on all orders.

Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded.

BIRKETT & PHILLIPS, LTD.
(Dept. S.M.4), Union Rd., NOTTINGHAM

SATISFACTION GUARANTEED OR MONEY BACK

WRITE NOW FOR FREE BOOKLET

Patterns sent Free on request. Don't fail to send P.C. for complete Price List.

You can mark the daintiest garments with CASH'S WOVEN NAMES

Lettering may be obtained in Red, Yellow, Green, Helio, Black, Sky or Navy Blue, *on White or Black Tapes.*

Prices:	WHITE GROUND.
12 dozen	5/-
6 "	3/9
3 "	2/9

Can be supplied by all Drapers and Outfitters at a few days' notice.

Samples and Full List of Styles FREE on application to—

J. & J. CASH, Ltd.,
(Dept. F.2), COVENTRY.

Send for book of uses of CASH'S FRILLING, which will be sent free.

Marjorie Kendall

Marjorie Kendall

CASH'S WOVEN NAMES

Marjorie Kendall

Marjorie Kendall

Trade Mark

Dancing Lessons that give you confidence

Every step in every dance is taught by Mr. Murray with lucid clearness.

100,000 pupils learn to dance in this new way

100,000 people have learned to dance by Arthur Murray's amazingly easy home system which is a triumph of lucid clearness. Murray pupils do not stop at half-way success. Their rapid progress gives them confidence and the ease with which they are able to master the basic principles of dancing encourages them so that they quickly become clever dancers. In the free atmosphere of your own home without help you can quickly master the steps of any dance in one evening and all the steps in all the dances in a remarkably short time.

The Murray method succeeds by the free use of diagrams and easy instructions which concentrate on essentials, and brings the important points of instruction into the foreground. Write to-day for synopsis of courses.

The Blues Trot

The Ritz, The Prince of Wales Fox-Trot, The Debutante Waltz, The Modified Tango, and all the new dances

taught in easy-to-follow home lessons specially prepared by the originators.

16-Lesson Course, 10/-

and Prince of Wales Fox-Trot lessons FREE.

To prove that the Murray method will teach you to dance in one evening, we will send you a 16-Lesson Course for 10/-, and as a special offer for a limited period only, the Prince of Wales Fox-Trot and Tango Fox-Trot lessons FREE. At the same time we will send you descriptive booklets and full synopsis of the complete Murray Dancing Courses.

ARTHUR MURRAY
(the world's largest Dancing School),
Studio 556, 150, Southampton Row, London.
Illustrated descriptive Booklet free on request.

THOMAS INCH.

I CURE WEAK NERVES

I want every reader of the "STRAND MAGAZINE" who suffers from nerve weakness or ill-health of any description to write *at once* for my free book on nerve trouble.

I can positively cure sleeplessness, the worry habit, irritability, palpitation, sudden exhaustion, heaviness of limbs—I can alleviate *ANY* heart, nerve, or stomach trouble.

You cannot be happy or a social or business success with weak nerves—let me make you fit so that you become the success you were meant to be. My treatment has been tested with difficult shellshock cases during the war and emerged with flying colours.

TO THE MIDDLE-AGED.

I hold some extraordinary testimonials from pupils, even over 60, as to the wonderful rejuvenating powers of the INCH HOME TREATMENT. You are invited to lay full details of your case before me and I will send book and diagnosis by return without fee or obligation. Enclose a 3d. stamp.

THOMAS INCH (Health Specialist),
(Dept. S.) York House, Putney, LONDON, S.W.15.

NATURE REPRODUCED

GROSSMITH'S
ARTIFICIAL LEGS, ARMS, HANDS & EYES

LIGHT WOODEN and LIGHT METAL.

IMPROVED LIGHT-WEIGHT ANGLESEY LIMBS,

As now being Supplied to Disabled Ex-service Men at Ministry of Pensions Fitting Centres.

DISTINCTIVE LIMBS for each Amputation.

Oldest Established in the World.

BRITISH MANUFACTURE THROUGHOUT.

ACCURATE FITTING, NATURAL MOVEMENT.

COMFORT
LIGHTNESS
DURABILITY.

World-Wide Reputation for Excellence of Construction.

Prize Medals:
LONDON, PARIS, DUBLIN, etc.

Illustrated Catalogue Post Free of

W. R. GROSSMITH, Ltd.
12, BURLEIGH ST., STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2.
And at 54, Dyke Road, BRIGHTON, Roehampton, Leeds, Manchester, and Glasgow. *Telephone: GERRARD 918.*

"OMA" Safety Self-filling Pen

5/-

(Half actual size.)

To be had of Stationers or the Sole Makers:

Fitted with 14-carat Gold Nib, Iridium-tipped. **Every Pen Guaranteed.**

JEWEL PEN CO., Ltd. (Dept. 3), 76, Newgate Street, London, E.C.1.

THERE IS MONEY IN COMMERCIAL ART

BUT until an artist learns to draw for reproduction he will never be able to sell much of his work. If you are anxious to sell drawings to the Press you must realise the necessity for special training.

The London Sketch School offers a thoroughly sound Course of Instruction by Correspondence, adapted to meet individual requirements, which, while developing any special talent the student may possess, always bears in mind the point of view of the Art Editor. If you are at all interested in the subject of drawing, either as a hobby or a profession, write for a copy of the illustrated Prospectus which will be sent post free on request.

THE LONDON SKETCH SCHOOL
(Studio L59), 34, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON, E.C.4.

WOLFF'S
Royal Sovereign
Pencils

The **Finest Pencil in the World**

Price **4D.** *each.*

BRITISH MADE.

TAYLORS for TYPEWRITERS

THE ERIKA

The Portable DE LUXE VISIBLE Writer in Two Colours. Complete in Travelling Case, £14 14s.

ALL MAKES on HIRE, HIRE PURCHASE, VERY EASY TERMS, BOUGHT, SOLD, REPAIRED and EXCHANGED.

WHY NOT BUY AN ERIKA FOR 5/- PER WEEK?
RAPID DUPLICATORS, ADDERS AND CALCULATORS.
Write for TERMS & BARGAIN LIST No. 11.

TAYLORS, Ltd., 74, Chancery Lane, London, W.C.2.
Est. 1884. **NEW & SECONDHAND OFFICE FURNITURE.** Tel.: Holborn 4810—4 lines

CURATIVE ELECTRIC TREATMENT at HOME!

WONDERFUL INVENTION THAT GIVES AMAZING VITALITY AND STRENGTH.

Write for Descriptive Book—FREE.

ARE you weak, despondent, lacking in energy, or suffering from nervous debility or lack of vitality? Then read of the remarkable success of the famous Pulvermacher Electrological Inventions which, in the privacy of your own home, re-establish a splendid condition of manly strength and nerve vigour.

HEALTH WITHOUT DRUGS

Hitherto Electrological treatment has been reserved for those who could pay the high fees of famous specialists in Electrotherapy, or who could spare the time to avail themselves of hospital or sanatorium treatment.

To-day all this is changed.

Thousands of sufferers cure themselves of troubles such as

Nervous Weakness, Lack of Vitality, Digestive Disorders (Indigestion, Constipation, etc.), Neuritis, Rheumatism, Sciatica, Gout, Kidney and Liver Troubles, Bad Circulation, Dizziness, etc., etc.,

simply by adopting a short course of treatment with the Pulvermacher Electrological Appliances. No need to visit any specialist's institute, no need to pay continuous fees, no expert aid is necessary. YOU CAN CURE YOURSELF inexpensively and permanently at home by wearing one of these appliances. They triumph over illness even when all other remedies fail.

The Pulvermacher Appliances are the only inventions for the administration of Curative electricity, endorsed by over fifty leading Doctors and by the Official Academy of Medicine of Paris.

VALUABLE BOOK FREE.

If you will write to-day you can receive gratis and post free a most fascinating book, in which this new and wonderfully successful method of overcoming all nervous troubles is plainly described.

We invite you, if you possibly can, to call, and without any obligation examine the Pulvermacher Appliances, when free advice and demonstrations will be given by the Head Superintendent. If you cannot call, **send your name and address on the form below,** and the special volume, "A Guide to Health and Strength," will be forwarded to you post paid.

"GUIDE TO HEALTH" FREE.

The holder of this coupon is entitled to a free copy of this book and particulars of the Pulvermacher Appliances. Simply fill in and post to

The Superintendent,
The Pulvermacher Electrological Institute, Ltd.,
56 Vulcan House, 56 Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

STRAND MAG., Dec., 1923.

The Abuse of Alcoholic Stimulants and Drugs.

It is not necessary to be an absolute confirmed "drunkard" to be in imminent danger of becoming, if not actually a slave to the vice, a victim of the injurious effects of alcoholic excess. Thousands of cases of clever and successful business and professional men, who could not be described in any way as "drunkards," but who had felt that they had to rely almost entirely on alcoholic stimulants or drugs, and were gradually losing control of their will power, have taken the treatment with the happiest and best results. The TURVEY TREATMENT, which can be sent to any part of the country or abroad, not only suppresses the craving for stimulants and drugs, but actually creates an antipathy to them and, whilst perfectly harmless to either sex, acts as a revivifying tonic, building up the wasted tissues and invigorating the whole nervous system—thus obviating that fearful sinking feeling of collapse which inevitably overcomes the patient's resolution to abstain from alcoholic liquors. Dr. Edward Hadley, in his interesting report to the Royal Commission, pays the following tribute to the treatment: "The effect of the TURVEY TREATMENT upon the patient is, in the majority of cases, evident from the commencement of the course. My observations, extending over many thousands of the most hopeless cases, show that, in addition to eradicating the craving for alcohol and drugs, the whole digestive, nervous, circulatory, and other functions are considerably benefited, a healthy and vigorous condition is attained, and mental and physical vigour become reinstated."

FROM A HEADMASTER.

"Please accept my most grateful thanks for your Treatment, which has caused a complete Cure. Like many schoolmasters, I found as I got older that sleep came less easily, and to produce it I had recourse to spirits, finding, as all other users do, that each year a larger quantity was necessary to produce the same effect. I suddenly realised that my drink bill was not less than £3 10s. a week, and the principal results of this expenditure was unbeneficial sleep, complete loss of appetite, loss of weight, and a general lack of 'fitness,' both physical and mental. Thanks to your Treatment, I am now a complete Teetotaller, with no desire for intoxicants, and in addition I feel so 'fit' again that I am restarting cricket, tennis, and my other sports which I gave up three years ago; my school work, too, is a pleasure now, and I find that all my interest in work and play has returned in an intensified degree. The great wonder to me is that this complete change has been brought about in my health and habits without any display of will power on my part, and without any derangement of my everyday work and life. My wife, who does not know I have been under your Treatment, cannot understand the complete change for the better in me in every respect. May I again express my heartfelt thanks to you and your wonderful results in my case?"

The following inquiry form may be filled in and forwarded (or a letter written), on receipt of which full particulars will be forwarded post free under plain cover. Consultation hours, 10 to 5.30.

.....

APPLICATION FORM.

To the Medical Supt., British Turvey Treatment Association,
14, Hanover Square, London, W.1.
Telephone, Mayfair 3406.

Sir,—Please send me under cover full particulars and consultation form.

Name .....

Address .....

.....

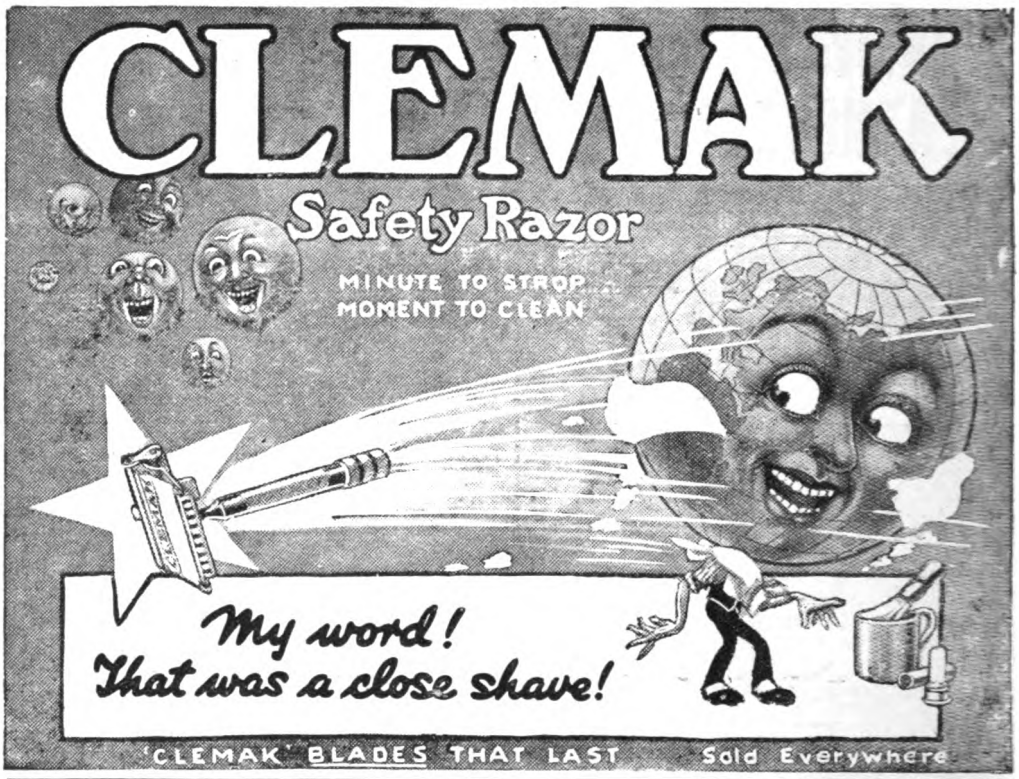
A letter giving particulars for the Medical Supt. may accompany this application.

STRAND MAGAZINE, December, 1923.

CLEMAK

Safety Razor

MINUTE TO STROP
MOMENT TO CLEAN



'CLEMAK' BLADES THAT LAST Sold Everywhere

MANSFIELD'S

PATENT AUTOMATIC

Water & Oil Finders

are used by leading Governments, Railway Companies, Land Companies, Well-Boring Engineers, and others.

A Colonial Engineer writes: "Since purchasing the Instrument I have selected 300 sites, most of which I have either bored upon with our own plants, or had bored by sub-contractors. In every instance we have been successful."

Prices of Water Finding Instruments are:

£50	locating at all depths up to	200ft
£75	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	500ft.
£125	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	1,000ft.

Prices of Water and Oil Finding Instruments are:

£200	locating at all depths up to	3,500ft.
£275	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	4,500ft.
£375	,, ,, ,, ,, ,,	6,000ft.

Delivery at Colonial or Foreign Seaports £3 extra.

We undertake the location of sites and boring at lump sum prices under guarantee of

"No full supply no pay."

Particulars on application to

W. MANSFIELD & CO., 17, BRUNSWICK ST., LIVERPOOL.

Makers of Well-Boring Plant, Pumps, Windmills, Oil Engines, and everything connected with Water Supply and Irrigation.

Cables: "MANTLES, LIVERPOOL." Telephone No.: 1392 BANK.

Do You Perspire?

—When you dance or play games, and feel uncomfortable and self-conscious, because of the inevitable results?

You can save yourself all this discomfort and assure yourself of undisturbable bodily freshness by regularly using **Poudre de Sante.** It is a fragrant, hygienic toilet powder, specially prepared for daily use, which corrects excessive perspiration, counteracts the discomfort and inconvenience caused by even a normal action of the skin, and acts as an **instant permanent deodorant.**

Trial Box - 1/3 post free.
Other Sizes - 2/9, 3/9 & 4/9.

MARSHALL & CO.
70a, BASINGHALL STREET, E.C.

Goes twice as far
as most other baking powders and is therefore more economical.

BORWICK'S
BAKING POWDER

Makes bread, cakes, pastry, puddings and pies lighter, more digestible and so delightfully appetizing.

THE STRAND MAGAZINE.

Contents for December, 1923.

The rights of translation and reproduction in the contents of this number are strictly reserved.

Frontispiece: "Now or never! I seized the top of the wall with my hand and drew myself up. I had one parting glimpse of the sentries still talking fifteen yards away."

		Page
MY ESCAPE FROM THE BOERS—Part I. Now told in full for the first time. Illustrations from Drawings and a Photograph.	THE RT. HON. WINSTON CHURCHILL	537
THE TARN ... Illustrations by A. Gilbert, R.O.I.	HUGH WALPOLE	548
ACROSTICS		556
MEMORIES AND ADVENTURES.—Part III. Illustrations from Drawings and Photographs.	A. CONAN DOYLE	557
THE LONG ARM OF LOONEY COOTE Illustrations by Reginald Cleaver.	P. G. WODEHOUSE	567
THE QUEST OF THE GRIZZLY-GRAY Illustrations by C. E. Brock, R.I.	BERTRAM ATKEY	581
FACE VALUE Illustrations by Chas. Crombie.	ROLAND PERTWEE	594
MY ROYAL SITTERS A Symposium of Artists who have painted the Royal Family. Illustrations from Paintings.		610
A FAMOUS PAINTER OF PRETTY GIRLS: THE ART OF SUZANNE MEUNIER		619
WHITE SLIPPERS Illustrations by Ugo Matania.	CHARLTON LAWRENCE EDHOLM	624
TRIAL BY ORDEAL Illustrations by A. C. Michael.	F. BRITTEN AUSTIN	638
CHRISTMAS PROBLEMS Illustrations from Diagrams.	HENRY E. DUDENEY	652
NOT WHOLLY MATRIMONY Illustrations by Treyer Evans.	THOMAS JOYCE	655
HEATH ROBINSON CRUSOE	W. HEATH ROBINSON	666

THE STRAND MAGAZINE is printed by the Newnes and Pearson Printing Co., Ltd., N. Kensington, and published monthly by the Proprietors, George Newnes, Ltd., 8 to 11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, England. Subscription price to any part of the world, post free, for one year, 15s. (Canada, 13s. 6d.). Registered at the General Post Office for transmission by Canadian Magazine Post. Entered as Second-class Matter at the New York, N.Y., Post Office. Cases for binding volumes of THE STRAND MAGAZINE may be obtained to order from Booksellers for 2s. 6d., or post free for 2s. 10d. direct from the Office. Half-yearly Volumes, 7s. 6d. net.

Sole Agents for Australasia: Gordon & Gotch (A/asia), Ltd. Sole Agents for South Africa: Central News Agency, Ltd. American Agents: The International News Company, 83 and 85, Duane Street, New York.

NOTICE TO CONTRIBUTORS.—MSS. and Drawings must be submitted at the owner's risk, and the Editor will not guarantee their safety, though when stamps are enclosed he will endeavour to return them. MSS. should be typewritten. All contributions paid for on acceptance.

The Index to Volume 66 can be obtained on application to the Publisher.

Most of the Original Drawings of the Illustrations in this Magazine are for sale. Terms may be had on application to the Cliché Department, George Newnes, Ltd., 8-11, Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

"Luvisca" (REGISTERED)

SHIRTS, PYJAMAS & SOFT COLLARS

"LUVISCA" looks like Silk, is more durable than Silk, is cheaper than Silk, and possesses something of the warmth of wool. The material par excellence for Men's Wear.

If any difficulty in obtaining please write to the Manufacturers, COURTAULDS, LTD. (Dept. 17M), 19, Aldermanbury, London, E.C.2, who will send you name of nearest retailer and descriptive booklet.

XMAS PRESENTS

are most practical when they are

"LUVISCA" SHIRTS, PYJAMAS, OR SOFT COLLARS.

INSIST ON SEEING THE "LUVISCA" TAB IN EVERY GARMENT. NONE GENUINE WITHOUT.

ALCOHOLISM

WHETHER ORIGINATING FROM NEURASTHENIA OR HABIT IS

UNDOUBTEDLY A DISEASE,

AND

CAN ONLY BE TREATED SUCCESSFULLY BY

A SCIENTIFIC MEDICINAL COURSE OF TREATMENT

THIS TREATMENT IS GIVEN AT THE KEELEY INSTITUTE AT MODERATE FEES.

NATURALLY THERE ARE MANY IMITATORS. IMITATION IS THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY, BUT

THE KEELEY TREATMENT IS THE ORIGINAL and has stood the test of over 30 years.

A copy of "Truth" Report and full information on application. All communications in confidence.

Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, Lord Forster of Lepe, and the Rev. R. J. Campbell, M.A., act as the Honorary Committee of the Institute. The Committee has made 14 Annual Reports, every one of which contains remarkable evidence of successful cures of Inebriety and Drug-taking.

Arrangements can be made if necessary for the Treatment to be administered at home, or for a doctor to travel with the patient while taking the cure. The Treatment is always administered by one of our own physicians.

THE KEELEY INSTITUTE (Dept. 7), 9, West Bolton Gardens, LONDON, S.W.
(Telephone: Kensington 813.)

There is every chance—

that one of these distinguished styles of Norwell Footwear will appeal to you. If so clear instructions as to how to order on approval are given below. And there is a still greater chance that one of the delightful models in Norwell's free Catalogue will strike you as the right shoe for the right occasion—the right shoe for your style and fitting.

Norwell's 'Perth' Brogues

Direct from Scotland.

NORWELL GUARANTEE.

Money refunded should there be the least dissatisfaction.

Gent's "Braemore." Style G 7.—A lightweight shoe for Golf and general sports wear, fitted with crêpe rubber soles. Delightfully comfortable and give extraordinarily long wear. Uppers cut from special selection of brown willow calfskin. No seams or ridges to chafe feet.

27/6 POST FREE

21/- POST FREE

Lady's "Dunalastair." Style G 14.—A most attractive shoe, fully brogued in a new design of punching. Supplied in Brown Willow Calf, Patent Calfskin, and Grey and Nigger Suede. Wide welts, 1½-in. low Cuban heel. Sizes and half sizes.

This is Norwell's improved system by which you can safely buy their high quality shoes by post. They will send a single shoe on approval to any address in Great Britain on receipt of 9d. for postage.

When ordering send pencilled outline of the stockinged foot obtained by running pencil around foot resting lightly on paper. Perfect Fit assured.

We have a considerable overseas trade. Orders from abroad receive special attention—postage abroad extra. ℗ S.M. 5.

Write for free illustrated Catalogue, mentioning "Strand Magazine" to—

NORWELL'S "PERTH" FOOTWEAR, LTD., PERTH, SCOTLAND.

To face back of Frontispiece.

The Verdict of History

"FRUIT SALT" was first compounded at Newcastle-on-Tyne by Mr. J. C. ENO, a qualified and experienced apothecary. That was over half a century ago. To-day, it is known in every country in the world, and recommended extensively by doctors

Great and widespread as is its sale, the demand for ENO increases steadily. That is because people are getting ever more alive to the dangers of drastic mineral salts which, even if they do not upset one's constitution, are apt to form a harmful habit.

Time, the great tester, has proved ENO; History, the great judge, has given ENO the premier place among salines. The wise accept the verdict of history, and adopt Nature's Golden Rule of Health:

First thing every morning, drink a glass of water, sparkling with a dash of ENO

HANDY SIZE
1/9
HOUSEHOLD SIZE
3/-

The words "Fruit Salt" and ENO are the registered Trade Marks of J. C. Eno Ltd., London, S.E. 14.

GOOD HEALTH
ENO'S FRUIT SALT

To face end of Text.

CAN YOU FIND THEM?

The ASPIRIN Danger

consists in the risk of thoughtless people getting into such a habit of taking the drug that it ceases to benefit them. Aspirin is an exceedingly valuable drug for relieving headaches, lowering the temperature, inducing sleep, and many other purposes, but it is most certainly not a tonic or a cure-all. Another danger is that those who buy Aspirin Tablets may be misled by cheap prices to purchase adulterated, under-weight Tablets, compressed in such a manner as to be completely ineffective. Many such tablets will actually pass through the system absolutely unchanged. Beware of tablets made from cheap German stuff.

Why YOU should Buy

HOWARDS' ASPIRIN TABLETS

1. **They are all-British.**
2. **Pure, genuine Aspirin.**
3. **Full weight (5 grains of Aspirin).**
4. **Instantly broken up in water.**

Of all Good-class Chemists.

HOWARDS & SONS Ltd. (Est. 1797), ILFORD, near LONDON.

ROSES ROSES

If you wish to be successful in your garden, all lovers of the Rose should be sure and plant **BRITISH GROWN ROSES.** Send your order now for the following collection and you will be satisfied.

Collection "C."—Consisting of Twenty-four Dwarf Roses, specially selected to succeed in any position where Roses will grow, we can recommend all the varieties; they will give pleasure in any garden.

PRICE—The Collection of Twenty-four Dwarf Roses, **Carriage and Packing Free** for the sum of **25/6** Cash with order. The varieties are—

Captain Hayward, H.P.
Caroline Testout, H.T.
Chateau de Clos Vougeot,
Conrad F. Meyer, Rug. [H.T.
Frau Karl Druschki, H.P.
George Dickson, H.T.
Georgeous, H.T.
Gruss an Teplitz, H.T.
Hugh Dickson, H.P.
Lady Ashtown, H.T.
Lady Hillingdon, Tea.
La Tosca, H.T.
Lieut. Chaure, H.T.
Los Angeles, H.T.
Mad. E. Herriott, H.T.
Mad. Ravary, H.T.
Margaret D. Hamill, H.T.
Mrs. Wemyss Quin, H.P
Ophelia, H.T.
Red Letter Day, H.T.
Richmond, H.T.
Souv. de Claudius Pernet,
Ulrich Brunner, H.P. [H.T.
W. C. Gaunt, H.T.

Also send for our complete Catalogue post free.

H. MERRYWEATHER & SONS, Ltd., The Nurseries. SOUTHWELL, NOTTS.

BOURNVILLE COCOA

SEE THE NAME

"Cadbury"

ON

EVERY PIECE OF CHOCOLATE

ROWLAND'S MACASSAR OIL

What beautiful hair . . . they all have!

Yet Dad's was getting "thin," Mother's falling, and little Dora's so straggly that it was to be bobbed! Then Mother decided to try a real hair tonic this time so she bought a bottle of Macassar Oil at her nearest chemist at 3/6, though there are 7/- and 10/6 sizes. It's worth trying to regain or retain the **natural** beauty of your hair.

GOLDEN COLOUR for fair Hair.

ROWLAND'S
112 Guildford St., Gray's Inn Road,
(late Hatton Garden)

Exquisite Irish Linen

makes

Beautiful Xmas Presents

THERE can be no present more charming or more certain to give *lasting* pleasure.

Order from this list—*NOW*, in advance of the rush and so make certain of delivery in time for Xmas.

IRISH LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS.

Fine Quality:		Extra Fine Quality:	
Ladies' size 10 ins.	6/- per doz.	Ladies' size 10 ins.	7/9 per doz.
,, ,, 11 ins.	7/- ,, ,,	,, ,, 11 ins.	10/9 ,, ,,
,, ,, 12 ins.	8/- ,, ,,	,, ,, 12 ins.	13/9 ,, ,,
,, ,, 13 ins.	10/- ,, ,,	,, ,, 13 ins.	15/9 ,, ,,
,, ,, 14 ins.	12/- ,, ,,	,, ,, 14 ins.	17/9 ,, ,,

No. 155.—**Ladies' Fine Hemstitched Irish Linen Handkerchiefs,** size about 11 inches, with any initial. Per doz. .. **12/9**

No. 811.—**Ladies' Fine Hemstitched Irish Linen Handkerchiefs,** size about 11 inches, with any initial. Per doz. **8/11**

Ladies' Dainty Mull Handkerchiefs with fancy printed borders. Per doz. **3 11**

No. 37.—**Ladies' Fine Irish Sheer Linen Handkerchiefs,** scalloped and embroidered all round, as illust'd. Each **3/6**

No. 119.—**Fine Irish Linen Cosy Covers,** Hemstitched and Scalloped edge embroidered in Shamrocks. Each **3/6**

MEN'S HEMSTITCHED FINE IRISH LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS.

Fine Quality:		Extra Fine Quality:	
Men's size 18 ins.	17/6 per doz.	Men's size 18 ins.	18/6 per doz.
,, ,, 19 ins.	18/- ,, ,,	,, ,, 19 ins.	20/6 ,, ,,
,, ,, 20 ins.	18/6 ,, ,,	,, ,, 20 ins.	22/6 ,, ,,
,, ,, 21 ins.	20/6 ,, ,,	,, ,, 21 ins.	24/6 ,, ,,

No. 124.—**Fine Irish Linen Hemstitched Afternoon Tea Cloths,** with fine white embroidery, size 36 inches by 36 inches, embroidered with "Baskets of Flowers" in each corner. .. Each **21/-**

Irish Linen Pillow Cases, real good quality which we can recommend. Size 20 inches by 30 inches. Four cases for **14/-**

No. 140.—**Men's Fine Hemstitched Linen Handkerchiefs,** size 20 inches, embroidered with any initial, as illustrated. Per doz. **22/9**

SPECIAL CHEAP LOT OF IRISH HEMSTITCHED LINEN HANDKERCHIEFS, Ladies' size in Bundles. 11 inches, 4/6 per dozen; 12 inches, 5/6 per dozen. Men's size, 17 inches, 9/9; 18 inches, 13/9 per dozen.

Goods not approved can be returned to be exchanged or money refunded. For Orders under 20/- add 6d. for postage.

Hutton's

95, MAIN STREET, LARNE, IRELAND.

Just before you go to Sleep

THAT'S the time to get rid of the defects in your complexion. Wash your face in warm water and, while the skin is still damp, smear a little mercolized wax over your face and neck. After a few nights of this treatment, all your wrinkles, all the blemishes on your skin disappear.

Mercolized wax dissolves away the old dry skin and leaves behind a new, healthy complexion. Beauty is but skin deep—mercolized wax brings it to the surface.

All chemists can supply you with mercolized wax.

2/- and 3/6. The large size contains nearly three times the quantity of the small.

Great Pianists of To-day

IGNACE JAN PADEREWSKI

Born November 6th, 1860, in Podolia, studied in Vienna under Leschetizky, and from 1887 in England, France, and America, his fame steadily increased with each of the many tours he made. His return to the concert platform in the present year re-established him in the position of the greatest of living pianists.

When Paderewski says:

"I welcome the opportunity to advise the general adoption of the instrument known as the 'Duo-Art,'" and when he entrusts his whole reputation to this instrument by recording exclusively for it, you must realise that the 'Duo-Art' stands in a class distinct from any other piano-playing instrument.

The 'Duo-Art'

'PIANOLA' PIANO

reproduces the actual playing of the great pianists

Every element of tone, technique and expression is preserved, giving you a perfect reproduction of the artist's original performance. Over one hundred of the World's first pianists have recorded for the 'Duo-Art.'

The 'Duo-Art' Piano is also a 'Pianola'; and as such it endows you with the ability to play yourself and express your own ideas of interpretation.

And finally it is a piano for ordinary hand-playing. There are three different pianos made as 'Duo-Arts': the Steinway, Weber and Steck. Each of these is the leading instrument in its class.

A Wonderful Winter

lies before you if you have a 'Duo-Art' installed in your home at once. Over one hundred of the World's greatest pianists—classical, light, and dance—will entertain you at will.

MAY BE PURCHASED ON TERMS TO SUIT YOUR CONVENIENCE.
A LIBERAL ALLOWANCE ON YOUR PRESENT INSTRUMENT.

Catalogue on Application.

THE AEOLIAN CO., LTD., Aeolian Hall, New Bond Street, W.1.

Let living fingers play your dance accompaniments

The 'Duo-Art' also reproduces the playing of the chief exponents of dance music: it offers a human touch, a perfect sense of time and rhythm that makes dancing a joy.

CURTIS

Cycles of Refinement and Perfect Service

THE HUMBER CYCLE RANGE for 1924 is as extensive as ever, and includes all possible modern improvements tending towards ideal cycling comfort and full enjoyment of the road. Many refinements and additions have been made, and prices reduced. The models listed below represent a mount for every class of rider, their outstanding features being character and refinement with perfect service and durability.

"Beeston" Gent's	..	£16	16	0	"Olympia" Lady's	..	£7 17 0
„ Lady's	..	17	6	0	"Cross Frame"	..	9 15 0
"Standard" Gent's	..	12	10	0	"Light Roadster"	..	8 8 0
„ Lady's	..	12	17	6	"Juvenile" Boy's	..	7 7 0
"Popular" Gent's	..	9	0	0	„ Girl's	..	7 17 0
„ Lady's	..	9	10	0	Tradesman's Carrier	..	10 15 0
"Olympia" Gent's	..	7	7	0	"Road Racer" ..	..	11 11 0

The "Light Roadster" is specially designed for Clubmen, and the new "Road Racer" is an exceptionally fine model and a useful mount for the speed man.

THE "SIX DAYS" MOTOR CYCLE

Motor cyclists should investigate the claims of the Humber 2¾ h.p. model, which has achieved wonderful successes in recent Trials. In the A.C.U. Six Days' Trials three of the machines were entered, winning THREE GOLD MEDALS and the Highest Team Award in the Crack Class.

Price **£55**

Cycle or Motor Cycle Catalogue sent free on request.

HUMBER LTD., COVENTRY.

LONDON:

City Showrooms: 32, Holborn Viaduct, E.C.1

Export Branch Office: Humber House, 94, New Bond Street, W.1

DEALERS EVERYWHERE.

Get your Christmas Dance Band from the Air!

Christmas dances in the home are apt to prove expensive, even when only a modest orchestra has to be specially engaged; and modest orchestras are apt to prove uninspiring.

This Christmas all the wireless Broadcasting Stations will be throbbing and thrilling with the finest dance music, played by the finest orchestras. These orchestras will play to you in your own home, without payment, if you install a Marconiphone Receiver.

Get one in good time for the festivities, and enjoy at its best the wealth of entertainment lavished from the Broadcasting Stations every day and every night.

You may rely implicitly on the technical perfection of the Marconiphone, the wonderful instrument in which, because it must be worthy of the great name it bears, are summed up all the vast resources, the brilliant inventiveness, of the Marconi Company.

The best Christmas present—for your family or your friends—is

The Marconiphone

The Triumph of the Master Mind

Ask your dealer for full particulars of the various Marconiphone models. In case of difficulty apply to:

MARCONI'S WIRELESS TELEGRAPH CO., LTD. (Marconiphone Dept.), MARCONI HOUSE, STRAND, W.C.2.

2, Ludgate Hill, BIRMINGHAM; Principality Buildings, Queen Street, CARDIFF; 41, St. Vincent Place, GLASGOW; 10, Cumberland Street, Deansgate, MANCHESTER; 38, Northumberland Street, NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE.

SANE SEX BOOKS

It is necessary for everyone to have a working knowledge of the central facts of Life and Sex. It is neither desirable nor "nice" to subscribe to a policy of ignorance and silence that has done more to militate against purity and health than all the unhygienic conditions in the world. For straightforward knowledge, there is only one choice—The Life and Race Series of informative books, published by "Health and Efficiency," the Sixpenny Monthly Physical Culture Magazine. Clean books, sensible books, authoritative books, they provide the education that Sane Common Sense should have insisted long ago on putting within the reach of all.

WISE WEDLOCK 6/9
The Standard Volume on Birth Control.
By Dr. G. COURTENAY BEALE.

THE REALITIES OF MARRIAGE 6/9
A Complete Answer to Marital Difficulties.
By Dr. G. COURTENAY BEALE.

SEXUAL PHYSIOLOGY 9/6
The Only Authentic Edition (Illustrated).

MANHOOD 3/-
The Facts of Life presented to Men.
By CHARLES THOMPSON.

MATRIMONY 3/-
The Truth about Marriage.
By MONA BAIRD.

WOMANHOOD 3/-
The Facts of Life for Women.
By MONA BAIRD.

GIRLHOOD 3/-
The Facts of Life for Girls.
By MONA BAIRD.

BOYHOOD 3/-
The Facts of Life presented to Boys.
By CHARLES THOMPSON.

HOW TO LOVE 3/-
The Art of Courtship and Marriage.
By WALTER M. GALLICHAN.

YOUTH AND MAIDENHOOD 3/-
Or Sex Knowledge for Young People.
By WALTER M. GALLICHAN.

THE NEW ANATOMY OF HEALTH 4/-
A Complete Home-course of Training for Health and Physical Culture by the Editor of "Health and Efficiency."

Each price includes postage and a copy of "Health and Efficiency." **SPECIAL OFFER.**—*The Complete Library of 11 Books as a ove* **42/6** *post free.*

HEALTH PROMOTION LTD.,
39, Efficiency House, Paternoster Square, E.C.4.

WHY SUFFER?

miseries through

Neurasthenia	**Liver Troubles**	**Rheumatism**
Headache	**Exophthalmic Goitre**	**Gout**
Megrim	**Diabetes**	**Acne**
Spinal Troubles	**Heart Troubles**	**Nasal Catarrh**
Neuralgia	**Arterio-Sclerosis**	**Throat Affections**
Constipation	**Angina Pectoris**	**Bronchitis**
Indigestion	**Varicose Veins**	**Asthma**
Mucous Colitis	**Piles**	**Stone in Kidneys**

and many other

Chronic Kidney, Bladder or Prostate Complaints, when these maladies can be quickly relieved and finally cured by

'SYSTEMATIC' HOMŒOPATHY

If you have taken the usual prescriptions, tried many patent medicines, and are still uncured, order at once and read without delay

'EVERYDAY CHRONIC MALADIES'

Their Causes, Course, and Cure.
By MAURICE ERNEST, LL.D.,
Homœopathic Consultant.

Nearly 200 pages Illustrated. 10th Edition. **2/-**

The author, Dr. Maurice Ernest, of 93, Cromwell Road, London, is an unorthodox medical man who has given more thought to, and thanks to his large practice gained more experience in, the treatment of Everyday Chronic Maladies than any living authority. His book will show you how Systematic Treatment can cure almost any Chronic Ailment. Thousands of Chronic Sufferers have been benefited by reading "*Everyday Chronic Maladies.*"

Send at once 2/- (Postal Order or Stamps) to the Publishers, **M. A. ADAM & CO., 85, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1,** and the book will arrive, post free, by return; or order it at the nearest bookstall. Foreign or Colonial stamps accepted.

WHY BE TOO FAT?

Regain Your Health & Beauty and reduce your weight quickly by commencing the never-failing Antipon Treatment NOW. It has 21 years reputation, and is the only safe, sure and pleasant remedy for over-stoutness. No change of diet, but a reduction of 8 oz. to 3 lb. in a single day and night. Sold in powder and liquid, by Boots (600 branches), and all Chemists and Stores the world over. Price 3/- and 5/-, or powder form in plain wrapper direct from the ANTIPON CO. (Desk No. 3), 27, Store Street, London, W.C.1.

Antipon

3/- & 5/- POWDER OR LIQUID

DR MACKENZIE'S SMELLING BOTTLE

For Colds, Influenza, Catarrh, Headaches, etc.

Of all Chemists and Stores, 2/-, or post free, 2/3.

Dr. Mackenzie's Laboratories, Ltd., Reading, England.

TRUTH. [SEPT. 26, 1923.

GARLIC AND CONSUMPTION.

Among the numerous—almost innumerable—letters about diseases and doctoring that have reached TRUTH Office during the last few months, one of the most striking told the following story. In April last the writer's wife, aged only twenty-four, was pronounced to have reached the incurable stage of consumption. The Tuberculosis Officer of the district in London where she lived declared that "she could not materially benefit from sanatorium treatment," and told the husband that it was no use trying to do anything further for her. The medical man in regular attendance on her confirmed these opinions. The despairing husband tried in vain to get her into a sanatorium; she "was not strong enough." He went to Harley Street in quest of the Spahlinger treatment, but was told that the serum was not obtainable, and would not be for some time. In this situation, a newspaper advertisement led him to try the effect of a bottle of "trimethenal allylic carbide," otherwise essential oil of garlic, otherwise "Yadil." An improvement in his wife's condition was very soon perceptible. Her strength returned rapidly, and by the end of July she was well enough to go away in the usual course of things to the seaside. The husband believed when he wrote to TRUTH that she was on the way to complete cure. Before he wrote he had satisfied himself by various inquiries that this experience by no means stood alone. Conse-

Truth about 'Yadil'

I STATE definitely, on the strength of seven years' medical and other experience, that the 'Yadil' Treatment can stamp out the white scourge in three years from the British Isles—provided it is used at once in every one of the half a million known cases and in all disorders which lead to consumption—pneumonia, bronchitis, influenza, coughs and colds, all fevers, etc. Full particulars and reports in my new booklet, "The Problem of Tuberculosis Solved," post free on request. Write to-day.

Alec Clement

'Yadil' Antiseptic is obtainable from all chemists or direct from Clement & Johnson Limited, *Research Medical Chemists*, 19, Sicilian Avenue, London, W.C.1.

Medical 'Yadil,' 2 oz., **2/9**; 6 oz., **4/9**; Pint, **12/-**; Quart, **22/6**
'Yadil' Antiseptic Veterinary is equally effective in all animal ailments. Literature on request.

Veterinary 'Yadil,' Liquid, 2 oz., **2/-**; 6 oz., **3/6**; Pint, **9/6**; Quart **17/-**

All sizes post free on receipt of remittance. For abroad add **3/-** for extra postage and packing.
The word 'Yadil' is registered. **Pronounce it YAH-DIL.**

W.S.P.

A WONDERFUL SELECTION OF MUSIC THIS CHRISTMAS

The makings of a *real* "Merry Christmas" will be found in this selection of bright pieces suitable for the festive season. Most of them, as the fashion of the day requires, are songs written to dance time; rhythmic, and full of vitality and "go," and just the qualities to make a happy time happier. Call and hear them at your music dealer's to-day. It will help forward your plans for the festivities, and probably solve some "difficult" gift problems.

SONGS

Love's First Kiss
Music by DOROTHY FORSTER

Bring Back that Dreamland
Music by MAX OSSETT

Life's Roadway
Music by A. EMMETT ADAMS

Little Dream Lady of Mine
Music by GRACE TORRENS

The Sweetest Flower of All
Music by GERALD CARNE

Slumberland (Hush-a-bye)
Music by DAPHNE HOPE

WALTZES

Let All the World Go By
Music by ARCHIBALD JOYCE

Red Moon
Music by HENRI DE MARTINI and MAX KORTLANDER

La Java (Play me a Melody)
Music by MAURICE YVAIN

The Shadow Waltz
Music by RALPH ARNAUD

PIANO PIECES

Love's Melody
Music by ERIK MEYER-HELMUND

***Two Novelettes (Price 2s. 6d.)**
Music by CHARLES ANCLIFFE

FOX-TROTS AND BLUES

When You and I Were Dancing
Music by H. M. TENNENT

We'll Find a Rendezvous
Music by W. ENGEL-BERGER

Don't Bring Me Posies (It's Shoesies that I Need) Music by FRED ROSE

En Douce (Dancing through Life with You)
Music by MAURICE YVAIN

C'est Jeune et ca N'sait Pas (Too Young to Know)
Music by CH. BOREL-CLERC

If We Could Live on Love
Music by ARTHUR REBNER

Mes Parents Sont Venus me Chercher (My Parents came to fetch me Home)
Music by FRED PEARLY

You to Me and Me to You (The Original Blues)
Music by CAMILLE DE RHYNAL

O-La-La Music by OSCAR STRAUS

That Lovely Melody
Music by ARTHUR DONALDSON

Siberia Music by JEAN LENSEN

La Violetera Music by JOSE PADILLA

Price 2s. each (except *), of all Music Dealers; or if unobtainable locally, send Postal Order to the Publishers.

Ask your local wireless station to Broadcast them.

Gramophone records on all leading makes.

ASCHERBERG, HOPWOOD & CREW, LTD.,

16, MORTIMER STREET, LONDON, W.1

The Beauty of Whiter Teeth

The way is easy, quick, delightful.

Make this test

This offers you a pleasant test—a way to whiter teeth. Millions now employ it. Many pretty teeth you see and envy are probably due to its use.

Find out what this method means.

Dingy film-coats

You feel on teeth a viscous film. Much of it resists the tooth brush and clings and stays there. That is the teeth's great enemy.

Film soon discolours, then forms dingy coats. That is why teeth grow cloudy.

Film holds food substance which ferments and forms acid. It holds the acid in contact with the teeth—the acid may cause decay.

New methods now

Dental science has in late years found ways to fight that film. One acts to disintegrate the film, one to remove it, without harmful scouring.

Able authorities proved those methods effective. Then a new-type tooth paste

was created to apply them daily. The name is Pepsodent. Careful people of some fifty nations are employing it to-day.

Other great helps

Pepsodent also multiplies the alkalinity of the saliva. Also its starch digestant. Those are there to neutralize acids and digest starch deposits which form. Every use of Pepsodent gives them manifold effect.

These results are bringing a new dental era. You will never go without them when you learn how much they mean.

Send for the 10-Day Tube. Note how clean the teeth feel after using. Mark the absence of the viscous film. See how teeth whiten as the film-coats disappear.

The results will amaze and delight you. Cut out coupon now.

Protect the Enamel

Pepsodent disintegrates the film, then removes it with an agent far softer than enamel. Never use a film combatant which contains harsh grit.

Pepsodent

The New-Day Dentifrice

Now advised by leading dentists the world over.

Sold in two sizes—2/- & 1/3

1249

10-DAY TUBE FREE

THE PEPSODENT COMPANY,
(Dept. 131) 42, Southwark Bridge Rd., London, S.E.1.
Mail 10-Day Tube of Pepsodent to—

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Give full address. Write plainly. Only one tube to a family. STRAND MAG./Dec.

Are you troubled by ASTHMA

Is your life a misery owing to attacks of that awful, strangling cough, which torments you day and night? If so, Potter's Asthma Cure is what you want. It gives immediate relief, however great your suffering. Try it to-day.

POTTER'S Asthma Cure

is confidently recommended to every sufferer from Asthma, as a means of both curing and preventing attacks. It enables you to go about your daily duties in comfort. Wonderful also in bronchitis, croup, whooping cough and other lung troubles. *Best remedy for bronchitis of children.* Free from opiates, and cannot cause headache or bad after effects. Innumerable letters have been received testifying to the merits of Potter's Asthma Cure, of which the following is an example—"Potter's Asthma Cure is the quickest route to recovery."

For Out-of-Door Use

Sufferers from Asthma, when in the open air, find the use of Potter's Asthma Smoking Mixture or Potter's Asthma Cigarettes a valuable preventive. The Smoking Mixture is supplied in **9d.** tins, post free **1/-**, and the Cigarettes in boxes of 18 for **1/6**, post free **1/8**. Smoked before going to bed they are a certain protection.

Potter's Asthma Cure is supplied by all Chemists, Herbalists and Stores for **1/6** or post free **1/9** from **Potter & Clarke, Ltd., 60, Artillery Lane, London, E.1.**

TWILIGHT SLEEP NURSING HOMES

Twilight Sleep painless Maternity is a boon which should be accorded to every mother and child. Prospective parents are invited to call or write for Illustrated Booklet of the leading Twilight Sleep Home in Great Britain. Resident physician. Best equipped. Most comfortable. Ten acres of beautiful grounds. Chalet for husbands and visiting friends. *Recommended by Medical Profession.* *Telephone: Kingston 1807.*

MATRON (B.L.), BUSHEY LODGE, TEDDINGTON, MIDDLESEX.

WOOD BROS. MATERNITY WEAR.

As supplied to Royalty and Society.

TAILORED TO MEASURE.

This charming little Coat-frock is only one of many others as quietly fashionable and as pretty, which can be made to your own measurements by Wood Bros. skilful Maternity Tailoring Service. Write for free catalogue to the Manageress. **Every Skirt and Frock fitted with Wood Bros. Regd. Self-adjusting Band. Wood Bros. also supply Everything for Baby from Birth. Full satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Prices:** Skirts from 14/11, Coat Frocks from 55/6, Costumes from 63/-, Accouchement Sets from 14/11, Maternity Belts 12/6, Complete Layettes from 35/-, Maternity Corsets from 8/11.

SPECIALITY—Improved models of Maternity Corsets, 12/6, 17/6, 25/6. Give the fullest support and preserve graceful lines of figure.

WOOD BROS. LTD. (Maternity Wear Specialists), 14, St. Mary's St., Manchester.

(The original inventors of Maternity Wear.)

The "Eleanor" simple little frock from **55/6**

IF hearing is impaired from any cause — don't despair. New Patent Invisible **"OREILLETTES" enable you to hear perfectly.**

DEAF?

An inexpensive outfit guaranteed to give satisfaction for **17/6** Money back if not satisfied.

Write for Booklet. Personal interview by appointment.

THE "OREILLETTES" CO. (Dept. A), 180, Windsor House, Westminster, London, S.W.1.

CURED MYSELF AFTER 20 YEARS.

STAMMERING.

After Stammering terribly for **20 years** and **trying 'teachers,' schools,** and advertised methods **without relief,** I at last **discovered the real cure** for Stuttering and Stammering (which **is very simple**), and **cured myself.** Now **no stranger could tell** that I had ever been a stammerer. **I will cure you** (or your child) in the **same way** and **guarantee a thorough** and **perfect cure, or no charge. Write to-day** for full particulars **FREE** if you mention *Strand Magazine.*—**MR. FRANK S. HUGHES, 7, Southampton Row, London, W.C.1.**

A New, Scientific Painless Method of Correcting Ill-Shaped Noses.

IN THIS DAY AND AGE attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life. Not only should you wish to appear as attractive as possible, for your own self-satisfaction, which is alone well worth your efforts, but you will find the world in general judging you greatly, if not wholly, by your "*looks*," therefore it pays to "look your best" at all times. **Permit no one to see you looking otherwise;** it will injure your welfare! Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life. Which is to be your ultimate destiny? My new *Nose-Shaper*, "TRADOS Model 25," British patent, corrects all ill-shaped noses without operation, quickly, safely and permanently. Is pleasant and does not interfere with one's occupation, being worn at night.

Write to-day for free booklet which tells you how to correct ill-shaped noses without cost if not satisfactory.

YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL FACE

BUT YOUR NOSE?

BEFORE. AFTER.

Above illustration represents my TRADE MARK, *and shows my first and oldest Nose-Shaper. It is not a replica of my latest superior Model No. 25.*

M. TRILETY, *Specialist,* **170, Rex House, Hatton Garden, London, E.C.1.**

Don't be TOO Fat!

YOU can now get rid of superfluous fat without dangerous drugs, dieting or exercises. Just add **CLARK'S THINNING BATH SALTS** to your bath. These Salts dissolve the fat from the tissues through the pores of the skin. Excess fat is an eyesore and a burden—and a dangerous one, as it imposes extra strain on the vitality and the heart.
Of all Chemists, Stores, etc., **1/3** a packet, **12** packets **13/6**; or post free direct from **HEPPELLS.**

Descriptive Booklet post free.

SPECIAL OFFER

Send **20/-** to address below for **12** packets of **CLARK'S THINNING BATH SALTS**; a large pot of **CLARK'S REDUCING PASTE** to make thick ankles slim and trim; and a box of **LAXATIVE THINNING PASTILLES.**

The Sole British Agents:
HEPPELLS, *Chemists*, 164, Piccadilly, London, W.1
and at Brighton.
AGENTS: S. Africa—Lennon, Ltd.
India—Smith, Stanistreet & Co.

CLARK'S THINNING BATH SALTS

Prepared by Clark's, Rue Vivienne, Paris.

Post it to Pullars

The waters of the River Tay, flowing through the Works, possess unique natural properties which enable Pullars to dispense with the need for chemical treatment. Costumes and Long Coats—soiled by use—can be beautifully cleaned, or if faded, dyed to darker shades for winter wear.

Pullars Pay Return Postage

Send to any Pullar Branch or Agency or Post Direct to

Pullars of Perth
CLEANERS & DYERS

VARICOSE VEINS

ULCERS, BAD LEGS, *etc.*, POSITIVELY AND PERMANENTLY CURED.

A Marvellous New Scientific Discovery *for* VARICOSE VEINS, BAD LEGS, *etc.*
SENT ON APPROVAL
Money Instantly Refunded if not Satisfied.

No matter how severe your complaint, our new method will CURE YOU Instant relief guaranteed, failure impossible. No drugs, bandages, or experimenting. no relapse, no quackery. Astounding successes where Hospitals, Specialists, Doctors, and other treatments have failed.

Thousands of Unsolicited Sworn Testimonials from all parts of the world, many from cases which were considered hopeless.

REMEMBER THIS
WE SEND THE
TREATMENT ON TRIAL

TAKE THE FIRST STEP NOW. Call or write for full particulars of our **Trial Treatment** and ask for Free Sample, **Testimonials**, and Booklet "B."

LE BRASSEUR SURGICAL MANF'G CO., LTD.
(Dept. D.A.),
26, Sackville St., Piccadilly, LONDON, W.

Head Office: 90 & 92, WORCESTER ST., BIRMINGHAM.
WORKS: PASSY, PARIS, FRANCE.

SUCCESS AT THE PIANO

is yours for the asking. The Wright-Higgins System teaches you to play brilliantly, without drudgery, fatigue, or years of study. It is the system written and conducted by a *musician*, and is by far the most interesting method of learning to play the piano yet invented. Write at once for booklet, "Training v. Teaching," and particulars of Free Keyboard Diagram. Diploma when proficient. Please state if Mr., Mrs. or Miss.

R. WRIGHT-HIGGINS, F.R.C.O., L.Mus., T.C.L., Oak House (S.M.), Lyonsdown Road, New Barnet.

THE DEAF HEAR

The New Patent

SOUND DISCS

Completely overcome DEAFNESS and HEAD NOISES, no matter of how long standing. Are the same to the ears as glasses are to the eyes. Invisible. Comfortable. Worn months without removal. Explanatory Pamphlet Free.

THE H. S. WALES CO., 171, NEW BOND ST., LONDON, W.1.

LIQUID LEATHER

The Famous French "Tharo." Strong and pliable 10 minutes after application. Most useful and economical for permanently and invisibly mending all Leather and Rubber goods. For Boots, Shoes, Motor and Pram Hoods, Upholstery, Bags, Bookbinding, Tyres and Hose Pipes. No skill required. Indispensable in every home, garage, and workshop. Black or brown. Simple to use. Full directions sent. **SEND FOR A TUBE TO-DAY.** Price only **2/9** post free; **3 for 5/-.**

S. ROBINSON SHIELDS & Co., 71, Lincoln's Inn Fields, W.C.2

GREAT MUSICAL DISCOVERY.

A BRITISH INVENTION.

A Pocket Instrument that plays in all keys as perfectly as a violin without the laborious study of scales. The only British-made Pocket Instrument on the market. Post free, with full instructions, **1s.3d.** Better quality **2s.3d.**

Range 3½ Octaves.

from **THE CHELLAPHONE CO.** (Dept.23), **HUDDERSFIELD**

"HOME STUDY

—THE KEY TO SUCCESS."

This Booklet gives full particulars of Pitman's 80 Postal Courses embracing: English and Secretarial subjects. Shorthand, Bookkeeping and Accountancy, Banking, Law and Accounts, Economics, Modern Languages, subjects of general education.—Write for free copy to-day to Pitman's School, 217, Southampton Row, W.C.1.

Motion Picture Shows

are the biggest money makers in the world. Start with the right machine. The very latest are the new model Brewstergraphs. The simplest to operate, will outwear any other motion picture machine. Brilliant and flickerless. **Colours** and **Reverses** all films. **Educational Bioscopes. Films** at halfpenny per foot, list **3d.** Cinema List, **6d.**; Lanterns, **1/-**; Slides. The marvellous **"LUNA" LIGHT** for all lanterns; **300** candle-power. **67/6. W. C. HUGHES & CO., Brewster House, 82, Mortimer Rd., Kingsland, London**

RUPTURE

POSITIVELY CURED.

Absolutely New, Wonderful and Inexpensive Treatment. Entirely superseding all out of date methods. Instant relief. Failure impossible. No torturing springs or pads, no quackery. Call or write for FREE TRIAL and Testimonials and Booklet "A."

LE BRASSEUR SURGICAL MANFG. CO. LTD. (Dept. E.L.), 26 SACKVILLE STREET, PICCADILLY, LONDON, W.

Head Office: 90, Worcester Street, Birmingham.

Works: Passy, Paris.

For cleaning Silver Electro Plate &c.

Goddard's Plate Powder

Sold everywhere 6d 1/- 2/6 & 4/6

J. GODDARD & SONS, Station Street, Leicester.

BEFORE YOU SHAVE WHAT DO YOU DO?

Rub Soap into Skin to make easy for Razor.

CANCER, Soaps, and Cosmetics.

In the *Daily Mail* on March 22, 1923, Sir George Lenthal Cheatle, lecturing at the Institute of Hygiene, deprecates the use of soaps, face powders, etc., as conducive to Cancer through irritation of skin.

CRISTALINE SHAVING BLOCK

It kills all soap immediately, thereby allaying all irritation and rash. *Of all Hairdressers, Chemists, etc. Small size, 7½d.; large 1/-.* Combination Block and Handle **1/2.** Postages 2d. extra, from Mfctrs.,

CRISTALINE CO., 1, Holland Street, NOTTINGHAM

WHY BE SHORT?

If you feel that a few extra inches are what you need, you should commence the Girvan Scientific Treatment at once, if you are under 40. It is carried out in your own home, and no one need know the secret of your increased height. Your friends will be astonished at the improvement in your appearance. Students report from 2 to 5 inches of increase. Your health and stamina will be much improved. You will work, eat, and sleep much better. Send P.C. for particulars and £100 guarantee to Enquiry Dept. S.M., 17, Stroud Green Road, London, N.4.

15,000,000 SATISFIED USERS

No. P71. Table Lamp 48/-

The Best and Cheapest Light, 400 C.P.

Cost ½d. per hour. Lantern will illuminate barnyard 600 ft. square

Adopted by U.S. Government.

Write for List to

Dept. 81, STANLEYS (Stratford), Ltd.

56, Warton Road, London, E.15.

Showrooms: 357, Oxford St. (1st Floor), W.1.

No. 335. Lantern 48/-

REAL HARRIS, LEWIS, AND SHETLAND HOMESPUNS

DIRECT FROM THE MAKERS.

Any Length Cut and Carriage Paid.

Patterns Free.

S. A. NEWALL & SONS, 24, Stornoway, Scotland.

State shade desired and if for Ladies' or Gents' Wear.

RHEUMATISM CURED.

To further advertise our marvellous **Galvanic Ring,** which absolutely cures **Rheumatism, Neuralgia, Gout, Nervous Disorders,** and all kindred complaints, we have decided to give a quantity away. Write to-day for size card, testimonials, particulars of free offer, &c.—

GALVANIC RING CO., (Dept. 36), Kew, London.

The "Titan" Air Pistol

A magnificent little weapon; quick, silent action. The strongest Shooting Air Pistol ever made. New departure from the cheap feeble shooting foreign-made article. Cannot be surpassed for target and bird shooting. Packed with supply of darts and slugs. The Improved "Titan," price **25/-.** Direct from makers:—

25/-

FRANK CLARKE (Record Dept.), 6, Whittall Street, Birmingham.

List of Air Guns, etc., free. Be sure to address 'Record' Dept.

WHEN XMAS, 1924, COMES

what will your position be? Why not become a **CERTIFIED SANITARY INSPECTOR, RELIEVING OFFICER, RATE COLLECTOR, MUNICIPAL CLERK, DISPENSER, BOOK-KEEPER-ACCOUNTANT, or PRIVATE or COMPANY SECRETARY?**

Prospects and Salaries excellent. Open to Both Sexes. Write for Free Illustrated Guide *to-day.*

Secretary, **SANITARY TRAINING COLLEGE, 335, High Holborn, London, W.C.1.**

HEIGHT INCREASED

IN 30 DAYS.

5/- **COMPLETE COURSE.**

NO APPLIANCES. NO DRUGS. NO DIETING.

The Melvin Strong System NEVER FAILS

Full particulars & Testimonials—Stamp, or complete course by return of post for 5/- P.O.

Melvin S. Stronge, Ltd., 10, Ludgate Hill, London.

If you can write you can draw

The A.B.C. School of Drawing has successfully trained over 7,000 students

Drawing is one of the most charming and interesting of all studies and, approached from the A.B.C. Method, it is comparatively easy. Anyone with average intelligence can become proficient and can learn to produce drawings which have a real market value.

The Course is famous for the thoroughness of its commercial art instruction. The production of drawings for Editorial and Advertising purposes, Booklets, Fashions, Humorous Sketches—all these important branches of work are fully dealt with.

If you are doubtful about your ability, send us a sketch, original or copied, and our Chief Instructor will criticise it and will tell you honestly what he considers are your chances of making good.

A copy of "Drawing—A New Outlook on the Subject," with full particulars of the A.B.C. Course, will be sent post free on request.

This sketch was drawn by Frank Timings, an A.B.C. Student.

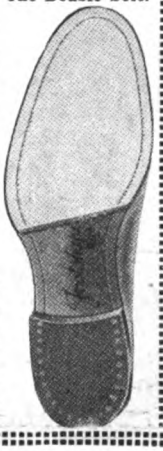
A.B.C. SCHOOL OF DRAWING (Studio 164a) 34, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.4

Halve Your Boot Bills

Barratts Double Sole Double Wear Boots By Post

This is a good-looking boot of usual weight which has extraordinary damp-proof and long-wearing qualities due to Barratts novel idea of the Double Sole. So long as a firmly stitched sole stretching from toe to heel can be kept in one piece and the welts and uppers unbroken a well-made boot must remain waterproof. But when an ordinary boot needs repair the original full-length sole cannot be replaced in one piece and the welts often get torn as the worn sole is stripped off. In making Barratts Double Sole Boots an "extra" protective outer sole is attached which, when worn out, is easily removed and replaced with a new one. Being always protected from wear and damp and never torn about in repair the insoles, welts, and main sole keep their original sound condition for very lengthy periods—double the life of ordinary boots is a very conservative claim for them.

The Double Sole.



Factory Price:

25/-

POST FREE.

Postage overseas extra. **Style 1655.**

Well-cut Derby or Balmoral pattern uppers of soft, substantial Black Box Calf; easy, round toe. Linen linings. Double soles of tough English leather, flexibly stitched (handsewn principle). Solid leather insoles. Over 30% is saved by the factory price, and at least 100 per cent. by longer wear.

Order Now By Post.—This Way.—State Style 1655 Derby Pattern, or 1614 Balmoral Pattern, and give usual size or Footshape, got by sitting down, resting stockinged foot on paper and running upright lead pencil round. Sizes: 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, in three widths: medium, wide, extra wide. Home orders, enclose **25/-** in cheque or money order (size 12 1/- extra). Overseas orders, send postage also. With Cash on Delivery Orders send 10/- deposit only. Legal guarantee of satisfaction or cash refund given. Post direct to Barratts factory.

W. BARRATT & CO., LTD., 25, Footshape Boot Works, Northampton

Let me Help You

My Advice is Free; you incur no obligation

PAY AS YOU EARN

Most Moderate Charges —Payable Monthly

Every Man is the Architect of his own Fortune!

ARE YOU QUALIFIED FOR A BIG POSITION?

WE CAN TEACH YOU BY POST

Architectural Drawing	Internal Comb. Engines	Surveying and Levelling
Building Construction	Marine Engineering	Telegraphy and Telephony
Clerk of Works' Duties	Mathematics	Wireless Telegraphy
Aviation	Matriculation	Book-keeping
Boiler Engineering	Metallurgy	Modern Business Methods
Boiler Making	Mining	Accountancy
Chemistry	Mine Surveying	Auditing
Civil Engineering	Motor Engineering	Costing
Concrete and Steel	Naval Architecture	Banking
Draughtsmanship	Pattern Making	Salesmanship
Electricity	Sanitation	
Engineering	Shipbuilding	
Foundry Work	Structural Engineering	

WRITE FOR FREE BOOKLET naming the subject you are interested in. We specialise in all Exams. Please state your age. Courses specially combined to meet all requirements.

ESTABLISHED 1900

The Bennett College

TECHNICAL — SHEFFIELD — COMMERCIAL

Dept. 6.

You can have the slim figure demanded by modern fashion without departing from your ordinary regime

All that is necessary is a pleasant course of hot baths with a small handful of

"Cyclax"

VIOLET RAY REDUCING BATH SALT

Price 7/6 per bottle.

Sufficient for twelve delightful lavender perfumed baths. Even after one bath a definite reduction of weight is noticeable. An invaluable tonic bath for those who suffer from acidity and rheumatism.

Write for a complimentary copy of Mrs. Hemmings' valuable book, "The Cultivation and Preservation of Natural Beauty."

"CYCLAX"

(F), 13 & 14, New Bond St., W.1. Telephone: Regent 2563.
58, South Molton Street, W.1. Telephone: Mayfair 3972.

Wear Real Silk

–it looks best.
–lasts longest.
–costs least in the end.

PER PAIR. **5/9** 3 pairs daintily boxed 16/6. POST FREE. Money returned if not entirely satisfied.

Black, White, Nigger, Tan, Mole, Suede, Putty, Shoe Grey, Mid Grey, Dark Grey, Silver Tinsel, Nude, Otter, Sand, Mushroom, Beaver, Tussore, Pastel, Cinnamon, Light and Dark Fawn, Sponge, Navy, Shoe Bronze, Champagne, Covert, Oyster, and Evening Shades.

MORGAN SQUIRE LTD., LEICESTER

NERVOUS FEARS

How many people fear meeting others, travelling in Trains, Trams, Tubes, or Buses, mixing in Society, going into a Restaurant, or of having anything important to do? Such Nervous Fears are ruination to any man or woman's chance of success in life. Become Nerve-Strong, Self-Confident, Bright and Happy by sending immediately 3 penny stamps for particulars of the Mento-Nerve Strengthening Treatment. GUARANTEED CURE OR MONEY REFUNDED.

GODFRY ELLIOTT-SMITH, Ltd., 491, Imperial Buildings, Ludgate Circus, London, E.C.4.

The most wonderful book of reference in the world is

WEBSTER'S New International DICTIONARY

which epitomizes in a single volume the present knowledge of mankind from A to Z.

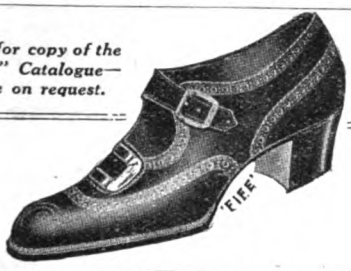
¶ To possess "Webster" is equivalent to owning an extensive and well-chosen library. No matter on what subject it is consulted, it never fails to give, quickly and with absolute authority, just the information required.

2,700 Pages; 6,000 Illustrations; 442,000 Entries.

A fascinating illustrated booklet, with specimen pages, **FREE** *on request to the Publishers,*

G. BELL & SONS, LTD., 1, York House, Portugal St., W.C.2

Send for copy of the "Fife" Catalogue— free on request.



THIS RENOWNED **'FIFE'** BROGUE SHOE

IS THE FAVOURITE AMONG LADIES OF TASTE owing to its distinctive style, honest quality, and long service.

SPLENDIDLY made from best materials with one Strap buckling over instep, Steel slides on front, Walking Sole, and Cuban Heel. Willow or Box Calf Leathers.

Order No. 598. Black per pair **31/-**
Order No. 599. Tan, per pair **32/6**
Also in Nigger or Grey Suede, cut from Weilds Calf Skins, recommended with every confidence .. **35/-**

Carriage Paid In U.K. Foreign postage extra. Can be had in all sizes. Send size or outline of foot, and Postal Order.
The "Fife" is worn and appreciated by thousands of ladies the world over. Trial Order proves the "Fife" merit.

A. T. HOGG,
No. 64, STRATHMIGLO, FIFE.
The Pioneer and Leader of the "Boots by Post" Trade.

Save Time and Money by Learning

DUTTON'S 24 HOUR SHORTHAND

Only 6 Rules and 29 Characters.
A Knowledge of Dutton's Shorthand will enable you to EARN MORE MONEY. Complete Theory Learned in 24 Hours. Send Stamp for FIRST LESSON FREE to—
DUTTON'S COLLEGE (Desk H), SKEGNESS.
(London: 92 and 93, Gt. Russell Street, W.C.1)

LEARN TO WRITE
and
Earn while you Learn.

SHORT stories and articles are commanding big prices, and the demand for contributions is steadily growing. You can qualify under expert guidance to earn money by your pen, and to make your spare hours profitable. The Journalism Course of the Regent Institute will show you how to achieve success. In a series of clear, practical, and interesting lessons you will be taught how to write and what to write about, and helped to produce saleable work as soon as possible. The instruction will be personal to YOU, and from the very start you will enjoy the use of an Advisory Service. *The moderate fee (payable by instalments) is inclusive.* (Special arrangements are made for Overseas students.)

Interesting Booklet FREE Write NOW for a free copy of "How to Succeed as a Writer," an interesting booklet which describes the openings for new writers, and the unique advantages of a postal course which is training men and women to write the kind of copy that editors want—and to earn while they learn.

THE REGENT INSTITUTE (Dept. 129N),
13, Victoria Street, London, S.W.1.

Beacon Oilskins for All. There's a Beacon for each member of the family, from the tiny three-year-old to full-grown outdoor men like Father, and each Coat, Mother's too, has a finish that *cannot* stick, and is guaranteed *absolutely* Waterproof, or money-back.

Illustrated List Post Free.
Send a p.c. to-day for "Weather Comfort" (describing Beacon Oilskins for all) to J. BARBOUR & SONS, Ltd., 19, Beacon Buildings, South Shields, England.

Men's Coats, 15/6 to 68/6

Ladies', 25/- up.

Kiddies' Oilies, 15/- upwards.

Be a GOOD PIANIST
without constant "Practising."

PRACTISING, intended to give facility and ease of expression, dulls the most musical sense, hardens the muscles, and takes all the *life* out of piano playing. My System approaches the problem from an entirely different and common-sense view-point. It does away with all need of constant practising, and yet requires no apparatus or specially written score. It is taught by post, but is in no way a set, stereotyped course, *for every pupil receives my individual attention*—and 16,000 successful pupils now testify to its simplicity and excellence.

Whether for absolute beginners, moderate or advanced players, my system is the quickest and most certain way to complete mastery of the piano.

16,000 Successful Pupils

My Book, "Light on Pianoforte Playing" (*fully illustrated*), should be in every pianist's or intending pianist's hands. A free copy will gladly be sent to you, but when applying please *do not omit* to state whether an advanced or moderate player, or if a beginner, whether you can or cannot play at sight a simple hymn tune.

"From Brain to Keyboard"
Macdonald Smith's System of Pianoforte Playing.

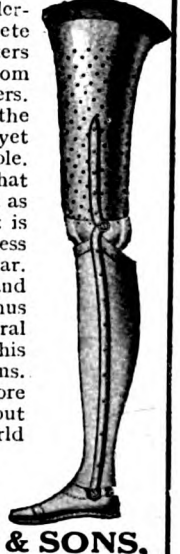
Sir Frederick Bridge and other eminent musicians use and highly recommend this system—fully explained in my book, which you should send for immediately.

Musical News describes my system as "the most striking discovery of the present generation for practical musicians."

J. Macdonald Smith, 19, Bloomsbury Sq., London, W.C.1.

AMAZING SUCCESS OF McCLEAN'S LIGHT METAL LIMBS

Every case we have undertaken has been a complete success. We have letters of keen appreciation from practically all our wearers. These limbs are at once the most comfortable, lightest, yet strongest limbs procurable. They are made of a metal that is as light as aluminium, but as strong as steel. The bucket is perforated to ensure coolness and greater comfort in wear. The heel is self-acting and actually lifts the leg in use, thus giving a wonderfully natural action. We make limbs on this principle for all amputations. These appliances cost no more than the ordinary, and without doubt are the finest in the world



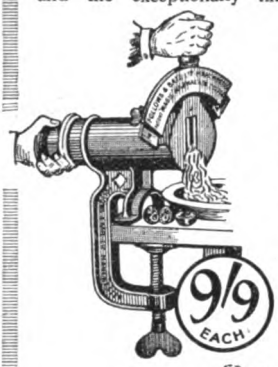
SEND FOR PARTICULARS.

Inventors and only Makers:

A. E. McCLEAN & SONS,
37, Aldwych, LONDON, W.C.2.
Telephone: Gerrard 7664.

MAKE YOUR OWN MARMALADE

Take advantage of the reduced sugar prices and the exceptionally fine orange crop and make your own marmalade. The "Magic" Marmalade Machine will cut oranges into fine even shreds—quickly and without waste. It is the world's most perfect machine, so simple and efficient that it can never get out of order. Get a "Magic" from your Ironmonger to-day.



"The Magic" MARMALADE MACHINE

Obtainable from all good Ironmongers, Hardwaremen and Stores, price 9/9 each.

The "New Universal" Marmalade Machine—a larger model suitable for heavy regular use in Institutions, Restaurants, Country Houses, etc. Price **18s.** each.

FOLLOWS & BATE, LTD., GORTON, MANCHESTER.

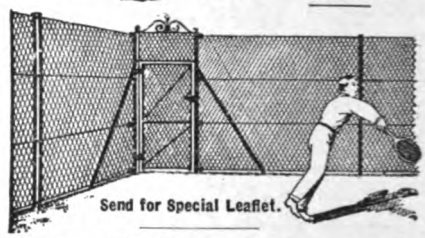
BAYLISS, JONES & BAYLISS, Ltd.,

Manufacturers of

DOG KENNEL RAILING,

TENNIS FENCING,

&c., &c.



Send for Special Leaflet.

IRON RAILING, GATES, &c., &c.

Catalogue Free.

WOLVERHAMPTON

London Offices: 139/141, Cannon Street, E.C.4.

HERE'S THE CLEVEREST TOOL EVER INVENTED

CAMP'S "P.C." TIN OPENER.

Looks complicated, but, in reality, far simpler and quicker than the old type. Works like a pair of scissors and opens in a few seconds any tin, of any shape—from a sardine tin to a petrol can. Perfectly safe, no risk of damage to hands. A wonderful time and labour saver. PRICE **1/6**

Ask your Ironmonger to show you the 'P.C.' Tin Opener to-day, or send 1/9 (to include postage) to

CAMP & CO., LTD.,

Manufacturers,

41b, Blenheim Crescent, London, W.11, ENG.

giving name of your local retailer.

The Celebrated "LAMBSKIN" Footwear.

As supplied by us to the Royal Palaces.

Ladies' Slippers £1 1s. Gent's £1 3s. 6d.
Bootkins 4s. extra. Children's Slippers, 12s. 6d. State size.

Of Soft Lambskin Fur inside and out. Infallible for Rheumatism, Chilblains or Cold Feet.

Numerous Testimonials.

Dept. 1, SHARP, Starbeck Hall, Harrogate

Lambskin Socks, 2/- Footmuffs, 39/6.

COGNAC BRANDY

VERY OLD

Box of Six 3/- 6 Boxes 16/6, 12 Boxes 30/- Post Paid.

3/-

In sealed glass tubes, ideal for Travellers, Heart Trouble. Beautifully packed plain flat Boxes.

Box Post Paid. NUTROIDS (Regd.) 69, Dulwich Rd., London, S.E.24

Cake Decorations

Home Assortment 3/6

Decorate your own Cakes for Xmas and Birthday parties. Immensely pleasing effects can be obtained with the dainty sugar flowers, birds, leaves, etc. Home assortment, No. S.M.1, sufficient for two cakes, 3/6 post paid. State colour preferred. Money returned if goods not approved.

Write for Free Catalogue

Postal Yeast Co. HULL.

GOLF In Comfort

21/- Post

21/- Free

GREATEST VALUE

In Men's Golf Shoes Obtainable.

No shoes equal these at the price of 21/-. Cut from fine Tan Calf, carrying either an all-crepe-rubber sole and heel or crepe sole and patent non-slip SCOT heel. Cash with order.

A. DUNCAN & CO., LTD.,
Dept. S., 22-24, Bank St., DUNDEE.

This Winter you must have

VICTORY "V"

Gums and Lozenges, even in the coldest weather, keep you glowing with inside warmth and prevent you getting chilly. VICTORY "V," the World's Winter Sweetmeat, sold by sweetshops in tins at 6d., or at 2d. per ounce, are delightful to eat on top of the 'bus, in the theatre queue, at the football match, in the train, on country walks, when going to bed—whenever you may get chilly. Get some to-day from your sweetshop and enter for our

£245 IN PRIZES FOR YOU?

EASY COMPETITION

First Prize, £50; Second Prize, £25; Third Prize, £20.
Twenty Prizes of £5, and Fifty Prizes of £1 each.

All you have to do is to cut out the Coupon, attach a single sheet of paper with the best 2 or 4 line rhyme about VICTORY "V" that you can think of. Below this, write your name and address and that of the sweetshop from which you bought your VICTORY "V," also you *must* give the names of at least three sweetshops in your district where VICTORY "V" are *NOT* stocked. Make as many attempts as you wish, provided each has a different set of non-stockists' names. To every competitor sending six or more of such names, we will send a generous sample of our specialities. The decision of this Company will be final in this competition. Watch the *Daily Mail* for Winners' names. Mark envelope "COMPETITION." Last day, January 31st, 1924.

FRYER & CO. (Nelson), LTD., Nelson, Lancs.

Makers of the World's Winter Sweetmeat for over 50 years.

Coupon from *STRAND MAGAZINE* for VICTORY "V" Competition

Victory-V

FOR COLD JOURNEYS

THE FOSTER COLD MEDAL KNITTER

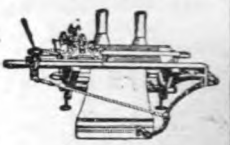
Provides PROFITABLE EMPLOYMENT for Home or Business.

This machine makes the fashionable knit goods for outdoor wear so greatly admired, Stockings, Socks, Sports Coats, Jumpers, Scarves, and Underclothing. Awarded 28 Medals. Easily learnt. Over 12,000 sold. Established 1861. Write for

Cash, Hire, or Work Terms. Wools Wholesale. Samples Free.

W. & J. FOSTER (Dept. H), Market Street Works, PRESTON.

Australian Agents: The Foster Knitter Co., 26-30, Jamieson Street, Sydney.



Mackill's Asthma Cure

A sure and speedy remedy for this distressing affliction. Mackill's is no NEW cure, but has been in operation for over 30 years, and its fame rests on the solid foundation of efficacy.

Liberal Free Trial on Receipt of 2d. Stamp.

Tins, 1/9, 2/9, and 4/6, post free.

THE MACKILL ASTHMA CURE CO., BATHGATE, N.B.

LABODEX SANITARY KNICKERS

PATENT 8314/12

Dainty. Reliable. Washable. Absolutely Waterproof.

A BOON TO LADIES.

In Nainsook, trimmed lace.

3 sizes. **5/11.** Postage 3d.

Also in **CAMBRIC 7/3, CELLULAR 10/6, JAP SILK 10/6 & 12/6, CRÊPE de CHINE 18/6 & 21/-**

Avoid disappointing imitations.

If unobtainable locally, write to Inventor,

MADAME CLAIRE DE LACOTE

(Dept. 3), 17, Church Road, Barnes, S.W.13

Are You Deaf?

If so, you can be relieved by using

WILSON'S COMMON-SENSE EAR-DRUMS

A new scientific invention, entirely different in construction from all other devices. Assist the deaf when all other devices fail, and where medical skill has given no relief. They are soft, comfortable, and invisible; have no wire or string attachment.

WRITE FOR PAMPHLET. Mention this Magazine.

Wilson Ear-Drum Co. *British Agent.* D. H. WILSON, 50, Raeburn Place EDINBURGH.

Psoriasis. BAD LEGS, ECZEMA and all skin diseases completely and permanently cured by

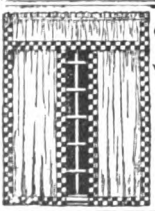
KUREM HOME TREATMENT

famous over 30 years. Entirely herbal, inexpensive, yet cures when doctors and hospitals fail. Send postcard for free book, sent under plain wrapper, which tells you how to begin your own certain cure at home.—**J. ROBINSON & SONS, 18, KUREM HOUSE, BRADFORD.**

Our Home STENCIL Outfits

form one of the most Delightful and Acceptable Gifts it is possible to give—sold at most Fancy or Art Supply Stores, or direct from the Makers: Prices **2/6, 5/6, 7/6.** The P.C. Stenciller for children, **1/- & 2/6.**

OWEN CAMBRIDGE & CO., BATHAMPTON, BATH.



Peach's Curtains

Free on Request, Catalogue of Window Draperies. USEFUL XMAS GIFTS. Direct from the Looms.

Nottingham Net Curtains, Casement Curtainings, Sunfast Casement Cloths, Cretonnes, Muslins, Household Linens, Blinds, Laces, etc. **WRITE FOR CATALOGUE** to-day.

S. PEACH & SONS.

112. The Looms, NOTTINGHAM.

How's the Weather?

THE old-fashioned "Jock and Jenny" Cottage will tell you surely, for the old dame appears *only* on fine days, while her husband prefers the wet. A miniature Swiss Cottage, 7 inches high . . . the Children's Weather Barometer. Order one to-day. Post paid, well packed **2/6** (Overseas **1/3** more).

BARBOURS [illegible]9, Weather House. SOUTH SHIELDS

ESTD. # ASHFORD'S 1730

CHIMNEY AND DRAIN SWEEPERS.

We make SETS from **35/-** up to **£10 10 0** according to requirements.

20 page List sent **FREE** *on request.*

W. & G. ASHFORD.

11, Lower Essex Street, BIRMINGHAM.

OAK STAIR RODS & EYES

HEATH FOWLER & Co.

(Dept. 11) DUDLEY

PIANO TAUGHT in a WEEK

Complete easy instructions, no teacher needed. Use our wonderful **PRINT-AND-PICTURE** method; enables anyone entirely ignorant of music to play the Piano, Organ, or Harmonium.

1,500 sold and every customer delighted. Money returned if not satisfied. Further particulars free. Send now, it's your chance.

DOMESTIC SUPPLY CO. (Dept. S), Bigyn, Llanelly, S. Wales.

Piano Learning for 3/0

INCOME TAX SIMPLIFIED

1923-4. Seventh Edition. 75 pages. Cheapest, practical, up-to-date guide. Preparation of Returns and Repayment of Tax. "Clear, concise, intelligible." **50,000 copies sold.** Send **1/7** to

ARTHUR FIELDHOUSE, Accountant, **Huddersfield.**

A REAL GUIDE to HEALTH!

YOU cannot be healthy unless your blood is pure. If you suffer from Catarrh your blood is overloaded with poisons. "Catarrh and Colds" is an interesting booklet which tells how Catarrh is caused and how to cure it at home without medicine. Experts describe the little book as the best guide to health ever published. Send 1/- for it to-day and mention this paper.

The ORZONE Company, 30, Ludgate Hill, London, E.C.4.

GROW TALLER IT PAYS TO BE TALL.

Short people are snubbed and overlooked. By my **simple private method** you can add several inches to your height, **without violent exercises, without apparatus.** No risk or strain. Full particulars **free** if you **write at once** and mention *Strand Magazine* (December).

Address: **S. M. EDISON, 51, Church Street, South Shore, Blackpool.**

TOBACCO HABIT

CONQUERED IN 48 HOURS

Tobacco cripples health. STOP IT WITHOUT DISCOMFORT.

FREE Book tells how to cure the craving. New antidote method. either sex. Write now, enclose stamp.

R.S.M. YORK, 3, Cannon Street, LONDON, ENG.

Thousands of Sufferers from Asthma and Bronchitis

have received instant relief by using Vapo-Cresolene. A household remedy avoiding drugs, Cresolene is vaporized at the bedside during the night. It has become in the past forty years the most widely used remedy for INFLUENZA, COUGHS, COLDS and SPASMODIC CROUP.

Vapo-Cresolene

Est. 1879.

"USED WHILE YOU SLEEP."

Sold by Chemists, and

ALLEN & HANBURYS, LTD.,

T.T. **Lombard Street, LONDON, E.C.3.**

ACHING, tired and strained eyes are a sure indication that your **EYES** require a soothing, strengthening and safe tonic. This **NEED** can best be filled by the eye tonic **OCULYSOL** SOOTHING—STRENGTHENING—REFRESHING.

Obtainable at all chemists and stores, or direct from the Manufacturers. Price 3/- per bottle.

The OPHTHALMIC & CHEMISTS' SUPPLY CO., 22 & 23, Great Tower Street, London, E.C.3

LET XMAS GUESTS SEE CLEANLINESS EVERYWHERE

Let every part of your home reflect cleanliness at Xmas. Your guests will remember it, if the W.C. pan is discoloured. Sprinkle with HARPIC at night, flush next morning, and the porcelain is snowy white, free from stains. 6½d. and 1/5 from chemists, grocers, ironmongers and oilmen. Get YOUR tin now and ensure cleanliness at Xmas.

Harpic THE ONLY SAFE LAVATORY CLEANSER FOR HEALTHY HOMES

HARPIC MFG. CO., Dept. B. 24 A. 2-14, Staple St., LONDON, S.E.

SANPIC Removes obstructions from drains. 3/- per tin.

TWO ZOX POWDERS FREE For NEURALGIA and HEADACHE

FREE Mention this Journal and enclose 1½d. stamped addressed envelope. Chemists and Stores sell ZOX in 1/6 and 3/- boxes, or if unobtainable locally post free at these prices from ZOX CO., 11, Hatton Garden, London, E.C.1.

Try this fascinating Face Powder

—it gives the true natural shade your skin needs.

You must use silk-sifted Icilma Face Powder—Naturelle tint if you want to *look natural* and to have that delicate pinkish bloom which men admire and women envy, because white or common powders reveal instantly to everyone that you have powdered.

The NATURELLE tint of Icilma Powder suits most complexions, gives the *true natural* shade your skin needs.

The CRÈME tint is the *right* for brunettes and those with dark complexions.

Icilma Face Powder—*the world's finest face powder*—is gloriously perfumed with Icilma Bouquet, is free from grit—really adheres and absorbs odour.

Icilma

Powder

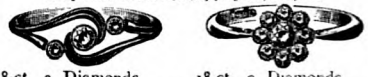
Naturelle and Crème
Popular Size Box 1/3

—the world's finest face powder

For XMAS PRESENTS, buy RINGS, &c., of

SAMUEL EDGCUMBE

Dealer in Precious Stones,
11, Cornwall St., PLYMOUTH.
Ring-Card to take size of finger, post free.



18-ct. 3 Diamonds **£12 0 0** — 18-ct. 9 Diamonds **£10 0 0**
„ 1 Sapphire and 2 Diamonds **£8 0 0** — „ 1 Sapphire and 8 Diamonds **£6 0 0**

Before buying send for my List, post free to any part of the world. A Single Article at Wholesale Price.

THE LATEST NOVELTY
The "HAVE-ONE" Cigarette Case
Automatic. Ejects Cigarettes by merely pressing the button. *(Patented)*

N.P. on Brass, plain **2/6**
Do., engine-turned **4/-**
Aluminium, plain - **3/6**
Do., engine-turned **5/-**
COVERED IN FINE LEATHERS **8/3, 9/6, 10/-,** ETC.

From all Tobacconists and Fancy Dealers. Or, if unobtainable, send remittance for sample, including 3d. postage (foreign postage 1/1), direct to
Sole Manufacturers:—
JOHN LECKIE & Co., Ltd.,
Goodall Street,
WALSALL, ENGLAND.

FALLING HAIR AND BALDNESS.

DOES not the individual cause of your Hair Falling, Splitting, Excessively Greasy or Dry, Dandruff, Scurf, Irritation of the Scalp, Greyness, or Bald condition, demand an Expert's diagnosis of what the particular cause is, and what individual treatments will correct? To comply with the numerous requests from those too far distant to personally consult him, Mr. F. W. BROMLEY, the Pre-eminent Private Consulting Specialist, has now issued a book: "INDIVIDUAL SPECIALISED HAIR AND SCALP TREATMENTS," with Consultation Form, which secures his individual FREE advice, if you send your name, address, and 1½d. stamp to Mr. F.W. BROMLEY, Consulting Hair & Scalp Specialist, 333, Oxford Road, MANCHESTER.

PAPER POCKET HANDKFS.

are essential for
NASAL HYGIENE, INFLUENZA, COLDS,
Hay-Fever, Measles, etc. *Pure white, soft "Silky Pilve,"* **50** for **2/-**.
Also "Papier Crepon," thicker, **50** for **1/9**. Get "TOINOCO" brand at your chemist's and avoid self-infection with a fabric handkerchief. **Post Free, Dept. S, Toinoco Co., 55, Hatton Garden, London.**

Don't STUDY Drawing

under any kind of tutor—that way leads to disappointment. If you are anxious to produce Humorous Sketches, Story Illustrations, Advert. Designs, Posters, Cartoons, Fashions, etc., which are so largely in demand, write for a copy of my latest Prospectus, giving full particulars of my Courses of Art Training by post. It is filled with happy sketches, some in full colour, and is an art education in itself.

NOTE.—I sell my pupils' sketches to the leading publications, and can sell yours when you are efficient.
Write to me personally enclosing 3d. (postage). My book will be sent by return post.
JAY GERRARD, B.W.S., The Northern School of Press Drawing (80), Bradshaw, BOLTON.

Linen
Sheets are
not dear

As prices have dropped, Linen Sheets are no longer beyond the ordinary buyer. The touch and feel of linen is so delightfully smooth and restful—does not cling to the body, but induces refreshing sleep.

No. S.M. 1223—Heavy Pure Irish Linen Sheets, woven from extra heavy flax yarns in the following sizes and prices per pair. ... ... 2 × 3 yds. **47/11**
2 × 3½ yds., **66/6**; 2½ × 3 yds., **58/6**; 2½ × 3½ yds. **68/3**

No. S.M. 1224—Hemstitched Linen Sheets of same quality as above in following sizes and prices per pair. 2 × 3 yds. **51/3**
2 × 3½ yds., **59/6**; 2½ × 3 yds., **61/11**; 2½ × 3½ yds., **72/6**

No. S.M. 1225—Bleached Irish Linen Sheets of medium quality, suitable for everyday use, in following sizes and prices per pair. ... ... 2 × 3 yds. **38/6**
2½ × 3 yds., **54/9**

Write to-day for Illustrated List No. 36L, sent post free. Delivery of parcels guaranteed, and carriage paid on all orders of 20/- upwards in the United Kingdom.

ROBINSON & CLEAVER LTD
Linen Manufacturers, **BELFAST, NORTHERN IRELAND**
Also at Regent Street, London. Church Street, Liverpool

BRITAIN'S BEST FOOTWEAR VALUE

Do not pay more than JACKSONS' moderate factory price for satisfaction

If you have been paying high prices for your footwear, try a pair of Jacksons' famous DRI-PED Soled Boots or Shoes. Buy footwear that keeps its shape, that is guaranteed waterproof and double-wearing—yet is sold at shillings less than shop price by Jacksons' factory-to-wearer one-profit plan.

ORDER BY POST

Only the best and finest leathers are used in Jacksons' Boots and Shoes. They are beautifully modelled in the latest styles and are finished in first-class style throughout.

In the wettest weather

Model A9210 for men will keep the feet snug and dry. It is a boot any man will be glad to wear. Made of the finest Black Box Calf, from picked skins, and lined with super-quality leather to prevent any chafing of the feet. The welts are stitched on the hand-sewn principle to give flexibility to the DRI-PED double-wearing wet-resisting sole. Would cost at least 30/- elsewhere. Similar style in Brown Willow Calf, No. 3260.

No. A9210
20/-
British Postage 1/- extra.

Send for Catalogue.

DRI-PED REG° *Super Leather for Soles means guaranteed double wear.*

For men who prefer shoes

there is model No. A9460—A gentlemanly shoe in the finest quality Brown Willow Calf. Our illustration is a faithful reproduction of this splendid shoe. Ninety per cent. of men will find in it all they require for foot comfort and style. The ankle fits comfortably and will not slip—the leather lining feels good to the feet—and the DRI-PED sole, which wears twice as long as the best ordinary leather of equal thickness, keeps the feet dry in the worst winter weather. Sole stitched on the hand-sewn principle to give spring to the step. Also in Black Box Calf, No. A7410.

No. A9460
20/-
British Postage 1/- extra.

All styles shown in list.

DRI-PED REG° *Super Leather for Soles keeps the feet dry in all weathers.*

One of Jacksons' Stylish Ladies' Models—No. 73416.

Made from picked Black Box Calf—soft and easy fitting, with suede lined quarters, which means added comfort to the foot. The cosy ankle fitting, specially stiffened and moulded, fits snugly without slipping. Welted as hand sewn for flexibility and soled with DRI-PED double-wear sole leather, ensuring dry feet at all times. This stylish, beautifully modelled shoe could not be sold at the price except for Jacksons' factory-to-wearer plan.

No. 73416
15/11
British Postage 9d. extra.

Perfect Fit and Style Guaranteed.

DRI-PED REG° *Super Leather for Soles—Splendid for LADIES' FOOTWEAR.*

HOW TO ORDER BY POST:

Tell us size usually worn (if in doubt trace outline of stocking-ged foot on paper, with pencil held upright), and include extra cost of postage in your remittance. Mention Style No. of shoe when ordering. Post your order to-day to

FREE: You can make your choice from a splendid range of moderately-priced, high-grade footwear, by having Jacksons' Illustrated Catalogue. A copy will be sent you on receipt of postcard.

JACKSONS, Ltd., Dept. 14, Victoria Wks., STOCKPORT, England

BRANCHES IN ALL LARGE TOWNS.

A23

Stop Scratching Bob!

Don't shout at your dog when he is scratching his coat. Far better to bath him with "Germicidal Dog Soap." Then dirt, germs and parasites are absolutely eradicated. Banishes the "doggy smell," and makes coat silky and strong. Of chemists, in tins **9d.** & **1/6** (3 times the size), or send direct, enclosing 3d. extra for postage to

HYGIENIC RESEARCH CO., LTD.,
106, Moorgate Station Chambers, London, E.C.2
Write for Booklet "S.M." "Friends of Man and their Ills."

GERMICIDAL DOG SOAP
Product of the HYGIENIC RESEARCH CO. LTD.

I SELL LOVELY LEATHER in all Colours, only 9d. per sq. ft. SALE PRICE.

You can cover your own Chairs, or make your own Gloves, Cushions, Dorothy Bags, and Stylish Hats in any colour.
Send 2d. stamp for full set of lovely patterns. I give away quite FREE to purchasers of leather, paper patterns and instructions showing how to make Hats, Bags, Cushions and Gloves.
A. E. CATT, Leather Merchant, Northampton

ARE YOU INVENTIVE?

Before attempting to sell your invention or patent, write to us to see what offer we can make you. We will gladly send you full particulars of our work.
WRITE TO—
Dept. 8, THE INVENTORS' SALES AGENCY, 29, Warwick Row, COVENTRY.

FUR ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS

beautifully executed. West End work at City prices. Highly recommended by "The Lady" and "Queen." Thousands of testimonials.
FUR RENOVATING CO., 58, CHEAPSIDE, E.C.2.

CHIVERS' CARPET SOAP

Cleans Carpets Like New.

One tablet will clean a large carpet. Sold everywhere. Sample 2d. stamp.
F. CHIVERS & CO., Ltd., 1, Albany Works, BATH.

BOW LEGS. ARE YOU BOW-LEGGED?

Without.

IF so, there is no need to worry about it, for you will cease to suffer any embarrassment from the moment you commence to wear the **B.L. Appliance** (which is worn like an ordinary garter), for you will always appear straight-legged, as

YOUR TROUSERS WILL HANG PERFECT.

Bow legs are a detriment to business, spoil your pleasure, and are a nuisance always.

This **Ingenious Appliance** is easy to put on, easy to take off.

HUNDREDS OF TESTIMONIALS.

With.

Write for **FREE** *Illustrated Booklet (S.M.), sent under plain cover, to*

THE B.L. APPLIANCE CO.,
Saffron House, 23, Charterhouse Street, London, E.C.1.

Himrod's Asthma Cure

If you suffer from *Asthma, Catarrh or Ordinary Colds.* Buy a tin today at your chemists.
4s. 6d. a tin

HEIGHT INCREASED

By adopting my simple system, you can put inches on to your height in three months. **No apparatus, no medicines. Ordinary habits retained.** Send stamp for particulars, testimonials, and £500 Guarantee, to **PROFESSOR PROWSE,** Specialist in the Increase of Height.
Oak House (S.M.), Lyonsdown Road, New Barnet.
N.B.—Ladies should send stamp for my Height and Beauty Course.

STAMMERING

YOU may be **really clever,** you may have **natural aptitude for organization and control,** you may have all the qualities that make one **attractive in society** and **successful in business, but because you stammer you never get a chance** to prove your worth. *You need not be "gagged" any longer.* By a very simple private home method you can be cured of **Stammering or Stuttering in 40 days.** Full particulars will be sent free privately if you write at once and mention *Strand Magazine.* Address—
D. M. Burton, 5, Ressendale Rd., St. Anne's-on-Sea

ATCO TURF CULTURE SPECIALITIES

Write for fully illustrated booklets No. 48

CHAS. H. PUGH LTD., TILTON ROAD BIRMINGHAM

BRITISH COLONIALS

I make a speciality of British Colonials, especially Rarities. **Selections Sent on Approval.** Want Lists will receive my personal attention.

T. ALLEN,
"Craigard," Blake Hall Road, Wanstead, London, E.11

NERVOUSNESS SURE CURE IN 7 DAYS

SUCCEEDS WHEN OTHERS FAIL.

FOR all forms of **Nerve** and **Heart Trouble, Timidity, Blushing, Trembling, Palpitation, Hysteria, Sleeplessness, Poor Memory, Depression, Neurasthenia. A Permanent Cure in 7 days,** simple, private, unfailing **Thousands testify** to its certainty. If you **WRITE NOW** mentioning STRAND MAGAZINE, full details will be sent **free** privately Address: **S.M.D., 12, All Saints Road, St. Annes-on-Sea.**

RHEUMATISM CURED WHEN DOCTOR and HOSPITAL FAILED

42, ELDON STREET, GATESHEAD.
Sirs,—I am 65 years old and was afflicted with Rheumatism. I suffered terribly night and day, and my doctor suggested hospital treatment. This I took, but after **twenty** weeks I found no relief. I was advised to try **Urace.** Within a month, Urace had effected a great change in me. I was enabled to have a good night's rest instead of torture. My friends are surprised at my appearance, thanks to your Urace treatment.—Yours faithfully, Wm. Hall.

URACE, and URACE alone, can cure Rheumatism. It directly attacks the cause—uric acid—dissolves and expels it from the system and prevents its reappearance. That is why it CURES and CURES QUICKLY. 1**3**, 3/- and 5/- per box, from Boots, Timothy White & Co. Taylors, and all Chemists and Stores, or direct from **The URACE** Laboratories, 48 Woburn House, Store Street, W.C.1.

URACE TABLETS

1/3, 3/- and 5/- from BOOTS and all Chemists and Stores

'TONSILS' 'ADENOIDS'
and ALL Catarrhal Troubles
in Children and Adults should be treated by
The KYNASTON Method

"95 per cent. of the operations for the removal of TONSILS and ADENOIDS are totally unnecessary."

THIS definite statement is made by Dr. Kynaston, one of the best known West End Throat, Nose and Ear Specialists, who, after years of study and practical application, has perfected a medical treatment which does away with these operations and is a certain remedy for CATARRH.

The treatment is so simple that it can be carried out with absolute confidence in your own home

Write enclosing 1½d. in stamps, or call for particulars.

BOUDOIR, DR. KYNASTON'S INSTITUTE,
SICILIAN HOUSE, SOUTHAMPTON ROW (KINGSWAY END),
LONDON, W.C.1. Telephone: Museum 751.

BUY A "BONZO" STUDDY DOG JIG-SAW PUZZLE

15 of the original and best designs in colours by the famous artist, Mr. G. E. Studdy. Made on the interlocking system in Satin Walnut, about 100 pieces in each puzzle, size of picture when complete about 10 x 7. Causes endless amusement both to young and old. Take one home with you and send one to your friends, it will be appreciated.

Price 3/6 each or 3/9 post free.

None genuine without this registered design on box. Made exclusively by

A. V. N. JONES & CO., 64, Fore Street, London, E.C.2.
Can be obtained from all Booksellers, Stationers, and Stores.

A SPECIAL OFFER. A world-famous Studdy Dog Calendar for 1924, bevel edge with hanging pad, size 10 x 7, together with our latest illustrated list of pictures and calendars, sent post free for **2/3**, or 2 Calendars for **4/-**.

DON'T BE GREY

Do you LOOK "just as young as you feel"? Those appearing grey hairs tell their tale. Often they put years that you have not reached on your appearance. Keep your hair the natural colour becoming to your looks.

NOTHING BUT VANIT

will do this for you effectually and without the slightest harm to the hair. It gives the exact shade required, is not removed even with a DAILY SHAMPOO, and one bottle is very lasting. Don't spoil your hair by trying other means. Get VANIT and permanent satisfaction at the same time. Thousands have sent testimonials —so will you. Sent by return post, secretly packed, P.O. 1/3.

Research Druggists, Ltd., 20, Lambert House, Ludgate Hill, ENG.

"But I don't want to be operated on."

How often one hears these words spoken, and the hearers, full of sympathy, feel an answering echo in their hearts! But should one be present who knows of

BURGESS' LION OINTMENT,

what a glow of satisfaction it is to be able to say, "You need not," and to call the sufferer's attention to the unfailing merit of this old remedy! It is the recognised cure for abscesses (tuberculous or simple), ulcers, bad legs, poisoned fingers, and wounds of all kinds, whitlows, carbuncles, boils, and obstinate skin diseases, eczema, ringworm, &c. Its penetrative power makes it a sure cure for bronchitis or colds on the chest, bringing the inflammation to the surface as pimples or a rash—a VERY safe application for the youngest child.

Keep LION OINTMENT in readiness for use in case of bruises, burns, scratches, and inflammation. It's better to be safe than sorry.

BURGESS' LION OINTMENT

Estd. 1847.

TRADE MARK.

can be obtained at a price as low as 1/3. Larger sizes for extended treatment 3/-, 5/-, &c., per box. Get one when near a chemist to-day.

E. BURGESS,
59 Gray's Inn Road, LONDON W.C.1.

FOR RHEUMATISM
— TRY —
A HOT SALTRATED BATH

A bath in hot saltrated water will stop the aches, pains, stiffness and swelling *within ten minutes*. Millions of packets of Reudel Bath Saltrates (for the preparation of saltrated water) have been sold, every one with the manufacturer's plain money-back guarantee enclosed, and the sale is increasing daily. *This means something.* Thousands of packets were used by soldiers during the war for the relief of rheumatic or other muscular aches and pains, gouty joints, foot troubles, etc. Your own chemist is authorised to return money in full, immediately and without a word, if you are dissatisfied. It is always kept in stock, already put up in packets of convenient sizes, and selling at very low prices.

New Life To the Weak, Weary, Nervous, Run-down, and Pallid. Thyroid GLANDETS restore Youth, Energy, Vitality, Nerve Force. Wonderful discovery. Never Fail. No Drugs. Trial Free. Percival Productions Ltd. 10, St Albans

WHY BE OVER-FAT?
Slender Grace guaranteed to all over-fat people by GRACELETS, the new safe, sure, pleasant way to slimness. No harmful drugs. No dieting. Literature sent free. Write to-day. Percival Productions, Ltd. 214, St. Albans.

DRINK HABIT
Conquered in 3 days.

Years have passed since I was freed from the drink habit. Since then I have been the means of aiding **thousands of men and women** to give up alcohol. Some have willingly taken treatment, others have been saved without knowing the cause.

The drink craze disappears and is replaced by a more normal condition of appetite, nerves, etc. **The improvement in the health** of an ex-drinker is marvellous when he gives up alcohol. Men **drinking a bottle of whisky or more daily** are safely and effectively stopped. **No danger to health, but a steady improvement manifests itself from day to day.** There is no inclination for alcohol; the former drinker is surprised and delighted at the great change.

The legions of testimonials, with photographs, which come to me from all over the world, offer irrefutable evidence of the sterling merit of my treatment. I send ample proof to every inquirer. *Three days' guaranteed method.*

It costs nothing to receive my book. It tells of my own experience and of how you may save yourself or another. Mine is **a genuine, reliable, and safe treatment,** that can be taken in one's own home privately. The treatment is supplied under legal guarantee involving no obnoxious restrictions. I count friends by the thousands—men and women who are known to me only by correspondence—who praise the Woods Treatment for the benefit it has done them, or others near and dear.

BOOK FREE

I will send you my book in plain, sealed envelope promptly, post paid, on receipt of your request. I appeal especially to those who have wasted money on ineffective remedies. Correspondence strictly confidential. Address:

Edw. J. Woods, Ltd., 167, Strand (353 C.B.), London, W.C.2.

This young sprite in the middle of the night
Had a bit of a narrow shave,
But espied with delight,
Santa Claus with FLUXITE
(He was saved from a watery grave).

FLUXITE is always ready in any emergency to take a hand. It knows no off days—always dependable—always the same. When the opportunity comes for you to do a little soldering job, bear in mind the great fact that

ALL MECHANICS WILL HAVE

FLUXITE

because it

SIMPLIFIES SOLDERING

All Hardware and Ironmongery Stores sell FLUXITE in tins, price **8d., 1/4** and **2/8. BUY A TIN TO-DAY.** Ask your Ironmonger or Hardware Dealer to show you the neat little

Fluxite Soldering Set

It is perfectly simple to use, and will last for years in constant use. It contains a special "small space" Soldering Iron, with non-heating metal handle, a Pocket Blow Lamp, FLUXITE, Solder, etc., and full instructions. Price **7/6** Sample Set. Post paid United Kingdom.

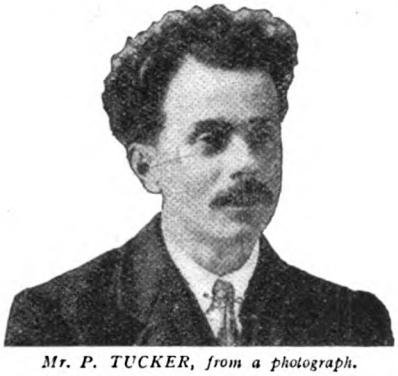
FLUXITE, Ltd., 160, Bevington Street, Bermondsey, Eng.

Reduced Price,
7/6

For the tool-kit of your car or motor-cycle or any soldering jobs about the home.

Bald Men Grow Hair

Amazing Hair Growth on Bald Heads After Using Kotalko the Genuine Hair Grower. Not a Medicine. Rub on the Scalp where New Hair is Desired.



Mr. P. TUCKER, from a photograph.

FULL GROWTH OF HAIR

Kotalko acts on Hair-Roots.

Dublin.

When I began using Kotalko I was bald. At the sides over the ears, and at the back, there was some hair, but on the whole of the crown of my head, from the forehead backwards, **there was no hair at all.**

I was not satisfied to be bald, but although I tried one preparation after another, not a single hair came into sight.

Then I bought a box of Kotalko, and used it on the scalp until I noticed signs of a slight down on parts of the head. Then I **knew the roots were not dead after all,** so I went on using Kotalko, and gradually **the down changed into real hair,** which kept on growing, until at last the whole of my head was covered with a **full growth of hair in its natural colour** just as it used to be.

Everyone who knows me has been surprised at seeing the hair growing again, and several of my friends have already ordered Kotalko, and are **highly satisfied** with it.—Yours very truly,

(Signed) **Thomas Hayes.**

WAS QUITE BALD

No need for wig now

Torrington, N. Devon.

After trying different Treatments without result, I was very disappointed, and thought I should be bald all my life, or else **have to wear a wig.**

Then I read about Kotalko, and decided to give it a trial. Please bear in mind that **I was quite bald** and **my head was as shiny as could be** when I started using your compound.

After I had used about two tins I found I had got hair coming all over my head. I continued to use it, and **now I have got a good head of hair again,** as shown in the photograph.

Yours very truly, (Signed) **P. Tucker.**

Mr. THOMAS HAYES, from a photograph.

KOTALKO
TRUE HAIR GROWER

A Multitude of others, men and women, have used the remarkable compound—Kotalko—with astonishing and delightful benefit in removing scurf, stopping the falling out of hair, and in developing a new growth. This has been done in many cases where the baldness existed for years, and when all other hair tonics, lotions, medicinal treatments, etc., have been unsuccessfully tried.

SEND THIS COUPON

or Copy It

Please send me postpaid Testing Box of KOTALKO with directions, for which I enclose 6d. in payment.

Name.....

Address.....

201 B.M. .....

The Secret lies in the use of genuine bear's fat (oil) and certain rare herbal ingredients. It is the genuine compound which the Cherokee Indians have used for centuries in insuring for themselves the extraordinary growth of hair for which they are noted. While trading in their territory Mr. Brittain secured the formula, and has since put Kotalko on sale.

A distribution of 30,000 testing boxes is now being made to those who apply—only one box to one person—either sex. To obtain a box it will only be necessary to send sixpence by P.O. or in stamps to the address below.

JOHN HART BRITTAIN, Ltd.,
2, Percy St. (201 B.M.), London, W.1.

Winston Churchill

gives many of his PERSONAL REMINISCENCES in the

ENLARGED XMAS NUMBER

PEARSON'S MAGAZINE

"SPLENDID ° LOVE" ° complete story by MARIE CORELLI

° 32 PAGES ·IN FULL· COLOURS °

SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS

n sale DEC. 1 PRICE 1/6

Motor Cycle Lighting

THE PHAROS UNIT

DYNAMO, CUT-OUT & SWITCH ALL READY WIRED UP IN ONE UNIT COMPLETE 75/-

Perfectly constructed and absolutely reliable. 6½" long by 2¾" diameter. Output for 4 or 6 volt., 7 amps.

A Postcard Brings Booklet Free

EVERY UP-TO-DATE MOTORIST NEEDS THE PHAROS UNIT

It revolutionises lighting, overcomes accumulator troubles, prevents accidents on dark roads, **AND THE COST IS TRIFLING.** No technical knowledge required for fitting. Call at our Works and let us demonstrate. Do not delay.

Sole Manufacturers:

MOTOLITE DYNAMOS, LTD.
(Dept. S. 3.)
Landor Road Works, Shepherd's Bush, London, W.12.

TELEGRAMS: DYNALITE, BUSH, LONDON. TELEPHONE: HAMMERSMITH 2472.

Chivers' Jellies

The World's Standard of Quality, for over a quarter of a century they have been the favourite table sweet.

Flavoured with Ripe Fruit Juices

CHIVERS & SONS, LTD., Orchard Factory, Histon, Cambs.

See this wonderfully illustrated Catalogue of Pictures before selecting your Xmas Gifts

"No better reproductions of paintings are produced anywhere than those turned out by Messrs. Frost & Reed, Ltd."
Daily Telegraph.

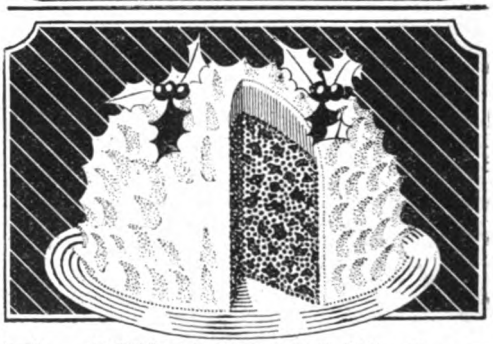
"Forgotten." *Now Ready.*

An Original Etching by Herbert Dicksee, R.E.

Those who desire to purchase a Picture or Pictures which will give added charm to the home should look through Frost & Reed's unique and beautifully illustrated Catalogue of Etchings, Engravings, and Colour Proofs, containing about 300 reproductions of Famous Pictures.

To ensure its appreciative use, a charge of **5/6** is made to partially cover cost of this Catalogue, which is refunded if a purchase is made.

FROST & REED, LTD., CLARE ST., BRISTOL,
PICTURE EXPERTS AND ART PUBLISHERS, ESTABLISHED 1808.
Also Albany Court Yard, London, W.1.



The "SNOWBALL" brings Christmas Cheer again!

Iced like a great glistening snowball and decorated with berried holly, this cake will bring the festive spirit to your table. Under the deep outer icing is a thick layer of rich almond paste, and the interior is packed with plump sultanas, cherries, currants, and candied peel. A delicious confection and a delight to the eye. Thousands of repeat orders come every Xmas. Post your order to-day.

6/6 Post Free and carefully packed
WEIGHT NEARLY 3 lbs.

THE LONDON BAKERIES, LTD.
(Late Williman & Turner), **West Norwood, London, S.E.27.**

I enclose cheque or P.O. for.....for which please send....." Snowball" Cakes post free.

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

Box Ottoman Couch

Makes Ideal Chest for Linen

Patterns of Coverings sent Post Free

55/- CARR. PAID

Soundly constructed & covered in Art Cretonne. Spring upholstered seat & upholstered pillow back arm. Mounted on 4 castors. seat hinged to lift up Lined inside. Size, 5ft long, 20in wide. 15in deep.

A. B. CULVER LIMITED
Derby St. Cheetham. MANCHESTER.
London Showrooms 259 GRAYS INN Rd W.C.1. (P)

WHENEVER you are looking for a particular piece of furniture send to us about it. We carry one of the largest stocks in this country—including valuable Antiques of all kinds as well as new and second-hand Modern Furniture. Correspondence invited.

LEA & CO., Northgate Street & Aldgate Street, GLOUCESTER.
(OFFICE FURNITURE A SPECIALITY.)

LEATHER FOR GLOVES

S. DOUGLAS McRAE & CO.,
Chamois Leather Manufacturers,
158, DRURY LANE, LONDON, W.C.2.
Chamois, Suedes, Mock Bucks, Chrome Sheep, Velvet Caps, Calf Crocodile, Tanned Basils, also Leather for Hats, Bags, etc.
Send for Price List and Patterns. Established 1848.

LADIES' FIELD
EXCLUSIVE FASHIONS

The ideal Fashion Journal for the well-dressed woman. Wide selection of the newest season's modes from Paris, London and New York.

BEAUTIFUL COLOUR FASHION SUPPLEMENT IN EVERY ISSUE

Published 30th of every month. **1/-**

WHY DID THE RABBIT BOLT?

Because a wise sportsman read our hints about Bolters, Draw Game, Shoots, Decoys, Snares, Traps, etc. 56-page Book No. 25, **7d.** post free (half actual cost), contains 200 illustrations, 999 tips for sportsmen; tells how to trap, snare and shoot everything from a rat to a bear, from a linnet to a pheasant, etc. Guns from 1/- to £100. Special line Silent Rabbit Gun, with 200 ball cartridges, 30/- (no permit). Mauser, 4.10 bore, with 50 kill-dead rook cartridges, 35/-. Do it now.
CLYDE BELL (Dept. S.S.), **19, Thistle St., Glasgow (West).**

IMPROVE THE HOUSE YOU'VE BOUGHT

YOU can make your home MORE ATTRACTIVE, MORE CONVENIENT, & MORE COMFORTABLE. You can RUN IT EASILY AND ECONOMICALLY

"Our Homes & Gardens"

tells you how to do so.

It is THE Magazine for the Owner-occupier.

Beautifully Printed. 1/- Monthly.

An Illustrated Prospectus sent, post free, on application to the Manager, 'OUR HOMES & GARDENS,' 20, Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2.

TOBACCO HABIT
CONQUERED IN 3 DAYS.

I offer a genuine guaranteed Remedy for tobacco or snuff habit in **72** hours. It is mild, pleasant, strengthening. Overcome that peculiar **nervousness** and craving for **cigarettes, cigars, pipe, chewing tobacco,** or **snuff**; they are **poisonous** and seriously **injurious to health,** causing such disorders as nervous dyspepsia, **sleeplessness,** gas belching, **gnawing,** or other uncomfortable sensation in stomach; **constipation, headache, weak eyes, loss of vigour, red spots on skin, throat irritation, asthma, bronchitis, heart failure, lung trouble, catarrh, melancholy,** neurasthenia, impotency, loss of memory and will power, impure (poisoned) blood, rheumatism, lumbago, sciatica, neuritis, **heartburn, torpid liver, loss of appetite,** bad teeth, **foul breath,** enervation, lassitude, **lack of ambition,** falling out of hair, baldness, and many other disorders.

STOP RUINING YOUR LIFE

It is unsafe and torturing to attempt to cure yourself of tobacco or snuff habit by merely stopping—don't do it. The gentle, safe, agreeable way is to **eliminate the nicotine poison** from the system, strengthen the weakened, irritated membranes and nerves, and genuinely overcome the craving. You can give up tobacco and enjoy yourself a thousand times better, while feeling in robust health.

BOOK FREE

My **FREE** Book tells all about the **wonderful three days' method.** Inexpensive, reliable. Also **Secret Method** for conquering habit in another **without his knowledge.** Full particulars, including my **Book on Tobacco and Snuff Habit,** sent in plain wrapper **FREE.** Don't delay. Keep this; show it to others.

Edw. J. Woods, Ltd., 167, Strand (353 T.E.A.), London, W.C.2.

Cures Like 1 o'clock

A London Star's remarkable testimony.

Mr. FRED BARNES, The Palladium, London, W., writes:—"I think 'Galloway's' Cough Syrup is simply wonderful. I always keep it on my dressing table. It immediately relieves hoarseness, and greatly assists me during my strenuous work of three performances daily." Every Singer or Public Speaker will know how quickly the voice tires, through the throat and chest becoming sore from continual use. "Galloway's" Cough Syrup soothes and strengthens the lining membranes of the throat, chest and lungs, giving almost instant relief.

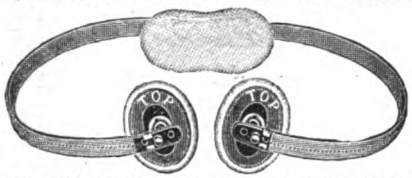
Mr. J. W. GRIGG, Norwich, writes:—"'Galloway's' Cough Syrup has always been a great benefit to members of my household for a great number of years. Nothing can equal it for its good work and value combined. It is a certain Cough Cure." Tens of thousands in all parts of the world have proved that "Galloway's" Cough Syrup is beyond compare. Quick, safe and sure. Every dose does a definite amount of good.

Every dose of "Galloway's" Cough Syrup is a sure step to speedy recovery, but see that it is "Galloway's."

GALLOWAY'S COUGH SYRUP

Sold by Chemists and Stores everywhere. Price 1/3 & 2/6 per bottle, or direct from P. H. Galloway, Ltd., Chemists, London, S.E.17. Price 2/- and 3/6 post free.

ESTABLISHED FOR OVER 100 YEARS.



SALMON ODY Patent BALL AND SOCKET TRUSSES

are still unapproachable in efficiency for all cases of Hernia, and they still enjoy that confidence throughout the Medical Profession which has made them so famous for over 100 years. Those wearing any other form of Truss, especially Elastic or Web Trusses, are invited to write to-day and prove for themselves the unique superiority of the Salmon Ody Patent Ball and Socket Truss.

Particulars Post Free.

SALMON ODY, Ltd., 7, New Oxford St., W.C.

BE LUCKY!

THAT the **Ju-Ju Nigerian Mascot** *does* bring luck is vouched for by the thousands who attribute their wonderful change in fortune solely to its mysterious powers. Read these extracts from recent testimonials:—

I have tried for ten years for prizes and I won a substantial prize last week. B.

I have had phenomenal luck in my investments in the share Market. J.H.T., N/c.

My luck changed the same day we got it. E. M., Fulham.

Everything I have touched prospered. G. C., Glasgow.

Everything we do seems to prosper now. B. S., Totnes.

Since receiving mascot my luck has been phenomenal. B. W., London.

Place **your** trust in the **Ju-Ju Nigerian Mascot** and success will follow as sure as day the night. Secure this lucky Mascot and be armed against misfortune. Quaint, curious, but above all, **luck-bringing.**

Sterling Silver, post free, 5s. 9ct. Gold, £1.

"A Ju-Ju worn to-day; your luck's in straightaway!"

JU-JU SOCIETY,

Imperial Bdgs, Westgate Rd., Newcastle-on-Tyne.

MAXALDING

IS THE MASTER-SCIENCE OF PHYSICAL & MENTAL EFFICIENCY.

In witness whereof you are invited to read the unsolicited opinions of people who enrolled under my care through having read my announcements.

MAXALDING

is the only method that has succeeded in securing a vertical development of the abdominal wall, as opposed to the horizontal development, which causes distended abdomen and dropped stomach. Examine the photograph herewith showing the vertical development, which is a **perfect** preventative and **cure for abdominal distension, dropped stomach, enlarged liver, indigestion, constipation, and** any weaknesses that might lead to **rupture.**

I AM EXCEEDINGLY GLAD THAT I TOOK UP MAXALDING.

An Army Major writes: "I am exceedingly glad that I took up Maxalding. It is a splendid system of Physical Culture. I feel thoroughly fit from the daily performance of the exercises, and I doubt if there is any other system which builds up muscle so quickly and at the same time is not tiring to carry out. I shall continue the exercises after I have finished the course because they keep one so perfectly fit."

NOW FALLS ASLEEP IN A FEW MINUTES.

An Accountant writes: "I adhered strictly to all you laid down with the first lesson and already I feel a decided improvement in my health. Digestion of food is much better, but what I am most pleased about is the fact that the sleeplessness has entirely disappeared, which is a most remarkable thing considering that I have been under your treatment for such a short time. Instead of it being several hours before I fall asleep, it is now only a few minutes."

INDIGESTION MUCH IMPROVED AFTER TWO YEARS' SUFFERING.

An Engineer writes: "The digestion is now much improved. I am pleased with the results up-to-date. I never thought that I should get relief from the terrible **after-meals** pains that I have suffered for over two years."

INDIGESTION, CONSTIPATION, BILIOUSNESS AND HEADACHES CURED.

A Lady, age 46, writes: "I am glad to report a complete cure of the Indigestion and Constipation, although it is only seven weeks since I started with you. The headaches and biliousness from which I suffered so frequently and so terribly have, as you promised they would, disappeared with the Indigestion and the Constipation. Abdomen is flatter, and complexion much less sallow. I can only repeat my apologies for being so sceptical in the beginning, but which was perhaps natural under the circumstances of repeated failures to secure relief."

THE ABOVE TESTIMONIALS ARE TYPICAL OF THOUSANDS THAT I HOLD FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED IN

MAXALDING BY CORRESPONDENCE.

YOU CAN FIND OUT ALL ABOUT MAXALDING and its application to your case by striking out the unnecessary items on the coupon, adding your **name,** address, age and occupation, and posting it to—

Mr. A. M. Saldo, 7D, Cranbourne Chambers, Leicester Square, London, England.

(FREE of all COST, POSTAGE or LIABILITY).

(1) **I desire to be cured of INDIGESTION, CONSTIPATION, NERVOUS DEBILITY, NEURASTHENIA, INSOMNIA, WEAK LUNGS, SUSCEPTIBILITY TO COLDS, RHEUMATISM, LUMBAGO, SCIATICA, OBESITY, SLUGGISH LIVER, DIZZINESS WHEN STOOPING, LACK OF PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT, LACK OF SELF CONFIDENCE, WEAK STOMACH, BILIOUSNESS, LANGUOR, HEADACHES, OR**

.....

(2) I desire to secure great Nervous Energy and Vitality.

(3) I desire to secure exceptional Strength and Muscular Development.

Name.....

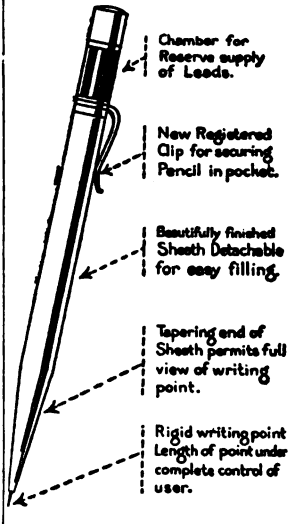
Address.....

Occupation..... Age .....

STRAND MAG.

Give an exquisite MORDAN "Centennial" this Year.

Made by the most famous Ever-pointed Pencil Manufacturers. : : : : : Established 1822.



The "Centennial" Ever-pointed Pencil is a gift for years and years of hard and satisfactory wear. It is so obviously practical in use. Such manifestly good points as the tapering sheath, the rigid writing point, the chamber for reserve leads, the new registered security clip for keeping the Pencil safe in the pocket, make the "Centennial" a joy to use and *the gift* for remembrance.

Like all Mordan products the "Centennial" bears the stamp of individuality. It is beautifully finished, and with ordinary care should last a lifetime.

In styles to suit every purse and all perfectly made.

PRICES:

Vulcanite from 2/6 **Silver Plated from 4/3**
Hall-marked Silver from 15/- **9-ct. Gold from 55/-**

LONDON MADE.

OF HIGH-CLASS JEWELLERS & STATIONERS EVERYWHERE.

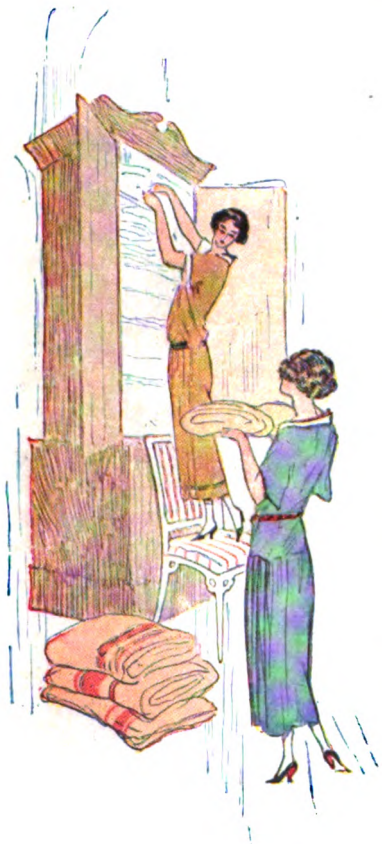
S. MORDAN & CO., LTD.,
41, City Road, LONDON, E.C.1.

Printed by The Newnes & Pearson Printing Co., Ltd., N. Kensington, for the Proprietors, George Newnes, Ltd.

BIRD'S
CUSTARD
It's easy
– see!

LUX

& WINTER COMFORT



When you snuggle down into bed on a chilly autumn night, you bless the warm, fleecy blankets that enfold you in soft comfort. Washed with Lux in the Spring, they are as good as new, not one harsh or brittle strand in any of them.

Lux is ideal for preventing the strands of loosely woven fabrics from *matting together*, and shrinking in the wash.

Blankets washed with Lux before they are put away in store, come out looking and feeling fresh, soft and as delightful as when new.

Packets (two sizes) may be obtained everywhere

WON'T SHRINK WOOLLENS

LEVER BROTHERS, LTD., PORT SUNLIGHT.

LX. 280-23

3 9015 05541 0685

UNIV. OF MICH.

MAY 3 1924

BOUND